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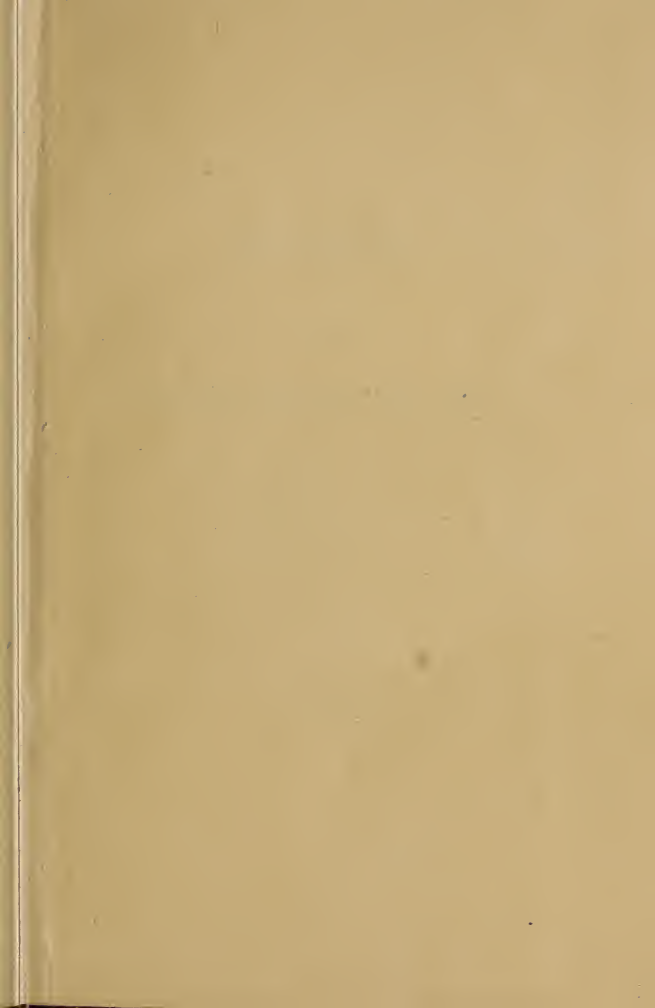
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ESSAYS

BY

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, M. B.

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GOLDSMITH'S ESSAYS.



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PREFACE.

THE following Essays have already appeared at different times, and in different publications. The pamphlets in which they were inserted being generally unsuccessful, these shared the common fate, without assisting the bookseller's aims or extending the writer's reputation. The public were too strenuously employed with their own follies to be assiduous in estimating mine; so that many of my best attempts in this way have fallen victims to the transient topic of the times; the Ghost in Cock-lane, or the siege of Ticonderago.

But though they have passed pretty silently into the world, I can by no means complain of their circulation. The magazines and papers of the day have indeed been liberal enough in this respect. Most of these essays have been regularly reprinted twice or thrice a year, and conveyed to the public through the kennel of some engaging publication. If there be a pride in multiplied editions, I have seen some of my labours sixteen times reprinted, and claimed by different parents as their own. I have seen them flourished at the beginning with praise, and signed at the end with the names of Philantos, Philalethes, Philaleutheros, and Philanthropos. These gentlemen have kindly stood spon-

sors to my productions, and to flatter me more have always passed them as their own.

It is time however at last to vindicate my claims, and as these entertainers of the public, as they call themselves, have partly lived upon me for some years, let me now try if I cannot live a little upon myself. I would desire in this case to imitate that fat man, whom I have somewhere heard of in a shipwreck, who, when the sailors, pressed by famine, were taking slices from his posteriors to satisfy their hunger, insisted with great justice on having the first cut for himself.

Yet after all, I cannot be angry with any who have taken it into their heads to think that whatever I write is worth reprinting, particularly when I consider how great a majority will think it scarcely worth reading. Trifling and superficial are terms of reproach that are easily objected, and that carry an air of penetration in the observer. These faults have been objected to the following Essays; and it must be owned in some measure that the charge is true. However, I could have made them more metaphysical had I thought fit, but I would ask whether in a short essay it is not necessary to be superficial? Before we have prepared to enter into the depths of a subject in the usual forms, we have arrived at the bottom of our scanty page, and thus lose the honours of a victory by too tedious a preparation for the combat.

There is another fault in this collection of trifles, which I fear will not be so easily pardoned. It will be alleged, that the humour of them (if any be found) is stale and hackneyed. This may be true enough as matters now stand, but I may with great

truth assert, that the humour was new when I wrote it. Since that time indeed many of the topics, which were first started here, have been hunted down, and many of the thoughts blown upon. In fact, these Essays were considered as quietly laid in the grave of oblivion; and our modern compilers, like sextons and executioners, think it their undoubted right to pillage the dead.

However, whatever right I have to complain of the public, they can as yet have no just reason to complain of me. If I have written dull essays, they have hitherto treated them as dull essays. Thus far we are at least upon par, and until they think fit to make me their humble debtor by praise, I am resolved not to lose a single inch of my self-importance. Instead, therefore, of attempting to establish a credit amongst them, it will perhaps be wiser to apply to some more distant correspondent, and as my drafts are in some danger of being protested at home, it may not be imprudent upon this occasion to draw my bills upon posterity. Mr. Posterity, sir, nine hundred and ninety-nine years after sight hereof, pay the bearer, or order, a thousand pounds' worth of praise, free from all deductions whatsoever, it being a commodity that will then be very serviceable to him; and place it to the account of, &c.

ESSAYS.

I.

DESCRIPTION OF VARIOUS CLUBS.

I REMEMBER to have read in some philosopher (I believe in 'Tom Brown's works) that, let a man's character, sentiments, or complexion, be what they will, he can find company in London to match them. If he be splenetic, he may every day meet companions on the seats in St. James's Park, with whose groans he may mix his own, and pathetically talk of the weather. If he be passionate, he may vent his rage among the old orators at Slaughter's coffee-house, and damn the nation because it keeps him from starving. If he be phlegmatic, he may sit in silence at the Hum-drum club in Ivy-lane; and if actually mad, he may find very good company in Moor-fields, either at Bedlam, or the Foundery, ready to cultivate a nearer acquaintance.

But, although such as have a knowledge of the town may easily class themselves with tempers congenial to their own, a countryman who comes to live in London finds nothing more difficult. With regard to myself, none ever tried with more assiduity, or came off with such indifferent success. I

spent a whole season in the search, during which time my name has been enrolled in societies, lodges, convocations, and meetings without number. To some I was introduced by a friend, to others invited by an advertisement; to these I introduced myself, and to those I changed my name to gain admittance. In short, no coquette was ever more solicitous to match her ribbons to her complexion, than I to suit my club to my temper, for I was too obstinate to bring my temper to conform to it.

The first club I entered upon coming to town was that of the Choice Spirits. The name was entirely suited to my taste; I was a lover of mirth, good-humour, and even sometimes of fun, from my childhood.

As no other passport was requisite but the payment of two shillings at the door, I introduced myself without further ceremony to the members, who were already assembled, and had for some time begun upon business. The Grand, with a mallet in his hand, presided at the head of the table. I could not avoid, upon my entrance, making use of all my skill in physiognomy, in order to discover that superiority of genius in men, who had taken a title so superior to the rest of mankind. I expected to see the lines of every face marked with strong thinking; but though I had some skill in this science, I could for my life discover nothing but a pert simper, flat, or profound stupidity.

My speculations were soon interrupted by the Grand, who had knocked down Mr. Spriggins for a song. I was upon this whispered by one of the company who sat next me, that I should now see something touched off to a nicety, for Mr. Spriggins

was going to give us Mad Tom in all its glory. Mr. Spriggins endeavoured to excuse himself; for, as he was to act a madman and a king, it was impossible to go through the part properly without a crown and chains. His excuses were over-ruled by a great majority, and with much vociferation. The president ordered up the jack-chain, and instead of a crown, our performer covered his brows with an inverted jordan. After he had rattled his chain, and shook his head, to the great delight of the whole company, he began his song. As I have heard few young fellows offer to sing in company that did not expose themselves, it was no great disappointment to me to find Mr. Spriggins among the number; however not to seem an odd fish, I rose from my seat in rapture, cried out, bravo! encore! and slapped the table as loud as any of the rest.

The gentleman who sat next me seemed highly pleased with my taste, and the ardour of my approbation; and whispering, told me that I had suffered an immense loss; for had I come a few minutes sooner, I might have heard Gee ho Dobbin sung in a tip-top manner by the pimple-nosed spirit at the president's right elbow; but he was evaporated before I came.

As I was expressing my uneasiness at this disappointment, I found the attention of the company employed upon a fat figure, who, with a voice more rough than the Staffordshire giant's, was giving us the 'Softly sweet in Lydian measure' of Alexander's Feast. After a short pause of admiration, to this succeeded a Welch dialogue, with the humours of Teague and Taffy: after that came on Old Jackson, with a story between every stanza: next was

sung the Dust-cart, and then Solomon's Song. The glass began now to circulate pretty freely; those who were silent when sober, would now be heard in their turn; every man had his song, and he saw no reason why he should not be heard as well as any of the rest; one begged to be heard while he gave Death and the Lady in high taste; another sung to a plate which he kept trundling on the edges: nothing was now heard but singing; voice rose above voice, and the whole became one universal shout, when the landlord came to acquaint the company that the reckoning was drank out; Rabelais calls the moments in which a reckoning is mentioned the most melancholy of our lives: never was so much noise so quickly quelled, as by this short but pathetic oration of our landlord. "Drank out!" was echoed in a tone of discontent round the table: "Drank out already! that was very odd! that so much punch could be drank out already: impossible!" The landlord however seemed resolved not to retreat from his first assurances, the company was dissolved, and a president chosen for the night ensuing.

A friend of mine, to whom I was complaining some time after of the entertainment I have been describing, proposed to bring me to the club that he frequented; which he fancied would suit the gravity of my temper exactly. "We have at the Muzzy club," says he, "no riotous mirth, nor awkward ribaldry; no confusion or bawling; all is conducted with wisdom and decency; besides, some of our members are worth forty thousand pounds; men of prudence and foresight every one of them: these are the proper acquaintance, and to such

I will to-night introduce you." I was charmed at the proposal; to be acquainted with men worth forty thousand pounds, and to talk wisdom the whole night, were offers that threw me into rapture.

At seven o'clock I was accordingly introduced by my friend, not indeed to the company; for though I made my best bow they seemed insensible of my approach, but to the table at which they were sitting. Upon my entering the room, I could not avoid feeling a secret veneration from the solemnity of the scene before me; the members kept a profound silence, each with a pipe in his mouth, and a pewter pot in his hand, and with faces that might easily be construed into absolute wisdom. Happy society, thought I to myself, where the members think before they speak, deliver nothing rashly, but convey their thoughts to each other pregnant with meaning, and matured by reflection.

In this pleasing speculation I continued a full half hour, expecting each moment that somebody would begin to open his mouth; every time the pipe was laid down I expected it was to speak; but it was only to spit. At length resolving to break the charm myself, and overcome their extreme diffidence, for to this I imputed their silence; I rubbed my hands, and, looking as wise as possible, observed that the nights began to grow a little coolish at this time of the year. This, as it was directed to none of the company in particular, none thought himself obliged to answer; wherefore I continued still to rub my hands and look wise. My next effort was addressed to a gentleman who sat next me; to whom I observed that the beer

was extremely good : my neighbour made no reply, but by a large puff of tobacco-smoke.

I now began to be uneasy in this dumb society, till one of them a little relieved me by observing that bread had not risen these three weeks : "Ay," says another, still keeping the pipe in his mouth, "that puts me in mind of a pleasant story about that—hem—very well ; you must know—but, before I begin—sir, my service to you—where was I ?"

My next club goes by the name of the Harmonical Society ; probably from that love of order and friendship which every person commends in institutions of this nature. The landlord was himself founder. The money spent is four-pence each ; and they sometimes whip for a double reckoning. To this club few recommendations are requisite, except the introductory four-pence and my landlord's good word, which, as he gains by it, he never refuses.

We all here talked and behaved as every body else usually does on his club-night ; we discussed the topic of the day, drank each other's healths, snuffed the candles with our fingers, and filled our pipes from the same plate of tobacco. The company saluted each other in the common manner. Mr. Bellows-mender hoped Mr. Curry-comb-maker had not caught cold going home the last club-night ; and he returned the compliment by hoping that young master Bellows-mender had got well again of the chin-cough. Doctor Twist told us a story of a parliament-man with whom he was intimately acquainted ; while the bug-man, at the same time, was telling a better story of a noble

lord with whom he could do any thing. A gentleman in a black wig and leather breeches, at the other end of the table, was engaged in a long narrative of the Ghost in Cock-lane: he had read it in the papers of the day, and was telling it to some that sat next him, who could not read. Near him Mr. Dibbins was disputing on the old subject of religion with a Jew pedler, over the table, while the president vainly knocked down Mr. Leathersides for a song. Besides the combinations of these voices, which I could hear altogether, and which formed an upper part to the concert, there were several others playing under parts by themselves, and endeavouring to fasten on some luckless neighbour's ear, who was himself bent upon the same design against some other.

We have often heard of the speech of a corporation, and this induced me to transcribe a speech of this club, taken in short-hand, word for word, as it was spoken by every member of the company. It may be necessary to observe, that the man who told of the ghost had the loudest voice, and the longest story to tell, so that his continuing narrative filled every chasm in the conversation.

‘So, sir, d’ye perceive me, the ghost giving three loud raps at the bed-post—says my lord to me, my dear Smokeum, you know there is no man upon the face of the earth for whom I have so high—a damnable false heretical opinion of all sound doctrine and good learning; for I’ll tell it aloud, and spare not that—Silence for a song; Mr. Leathersides for a song—‘As I was a walking upon the highway, I met a young damsel’—Then what brings you here? says the parson to the ghost—Sanconiathan,

Manetho, and Berosus—The whole way from Islington turnpike to Dog-house-bar—Dam—As for Abel Drugger, sir, he's damn'd low in it; my 'prentice boy has more of the gentleman than he—For murder will out one time or other; and none but a ghost, you know, gentlemen, can—Damme if I don't; for my friend, whom you know, gentlemen, and who is a parliament-man, a man of consequence, a dear honest creature, to be sure; we were laughing last night at—Death and damnation upon all his posterity by simply, barely tasting—Sour grapes, as the fox said once when he could not reach them; and I'll, I'll tell you a story about that that will make you burst your sides with laughing: A fox once—Will nobody listen to the song—'As I was a walking upon the highway, I met a young damsel both buxom and gay.'—No ghost, gentlemen, can be murdered; nor did I ever hear but of one ghost killed in all my life, and that was stabbed in the belly with a—My blood and soul if I don't—Mr. Bellows-mender, I have the honour of drinking your very good health—Blast me if I do—dam—blood—bugs—fire—whizz—blid—tit—rat—trip.'—The rest all riot, nonsense, and rapid confusion.

Were I to be angry at men for being fools, I could here find ample room for declamation; but alas! I have been a fool myself; and why should I be angry with them for being something so natural to every child of humanity?

Fatigued with this society, I was introduced the following night to a club of fashion. On taking my place I found the conversation sufficiently easy, and tolerably good-natured; for my lord and sir

Paul were not yet arrived. I now thought myself completely fitted, and resolving to seek no further, determined to take up my residence here for the winter; while my temper began to open insensibly to the cheerfulness I saw diffused on every face in the room: but the delusion soon vanished, when the waiter came to apprise us that his lordship and sir Paul were just arrived.

From this moment all our felicity was at an end; our new guests bustled into the room, and took their seats at the head of the table. Adieu now all confidence; every creature strove who should most recommend himself to our members of distinction. Each seemed quite regardless of pleasing any but our new guests; and what before wore the appearance of friendship, was now turned into rivalry.

Yet I could not observe, that amidst all this flattery and obsequious attention, our great men took any notice of the rest of the company. Their whole discourse was addressed to each other. Sir Paul told his lordship a long story of Moravia the Jew; and his lordship gave sir Paul a very long account of his new method of managing silk-worms; he led him, and consequently the rest of the company, through all the stages of feeding, sunning, and hatching; with an episode on mulberry-trees, a digression upon grass seeds, and a long parenthesis about his new postilion. In this manner we travelled on, wishing every story to be the last; but all in vain,

“ Hills over hills, and Alps on Alps arose.”

The last club in which I was enrolled a member,

was a society of moral philosophers, as they called themselves, who assembled twice a week, in order to show the absurdity of the present mode of religion, and establish a new one in its stead.

I found the members very warmly disputing when I arrived; not indeed about religion or ethics, but about who had neglected to lay down his preliminary six-pence upon entering the room. The president swore that he had laid his own down, and so swore all the company.

During this contest I had an opportunity of observing the laws, and also the members of the society. The president, who had been, as I was told, lately a bankrupt, was a tall pale figure with a long black wig; the next to him was dressed in a large white wig and a black cravat: a third by the brownness of his complexion seemed a native of Jamaica; and a fourth by his hue appeared to be a blacksmith. But their rules will give the most just idea of their learning and principles.

I. We being a laudable society of moral philosophers, intends to dispute twice a week about religion and priestcraft. Leaving behind us old wives' tales, and following good learning and sound sense: and if so be, that any other other persons has a mind to be of the society, they shall be entitled so to do, upon paying the sum of three shillings, to be spent by the company in punch.

II. That no member get drunk before nine of the clock, upon pain of forfeiting three-pence, to be spent by the company in punch.

III. That as members are sometimes apt to go away without paying, every person shall pay six-pence upon his entering the room; and all disputes

shall be settled by a majority ; and all fines shall be paid in punch.

IV. That sixpence shall be every night given to the president, in order to buy books of learning for the good of the society ; the president has already put himself to a good deal of expense in buying books for the club ; particularly the works of Tully, Socrates, and Cicero, which he will soon read to the society.

V. All them who brings a new argument against religion, and who, being a philosopher, and a man of learning, as the rest of us is, shall be admitted to the freedom of the society, upon paying six-pence only, to be spent in punch.

VI. Whenever we are to have an extraordinary meeting, it shall be advertised by some outlandish name in the newspapers.

SAUNDERS MAC WILD, President,
ANTHONY BLEWIT, Vice-president,
his † mark.
WILLIAM TURPIN, Secretary.

II.

SPECIMEN OF A MAGAZINE IN MINIATURE.

WE essayists, who are allowed but one subject at a time, are by no means so fortunate as the writers of magazines, who write upon several. If a magaziner be dull upon the Spanish war, he soon has us up again with the ghost in Cock-Lane ; if the reader begins to doze upon that, he is quickly

rouzed by an Eastern tale ; tales prepare us for poetry, and poetry for the meteorological history of the weather. It is the life and soul of a magazine never to be long dull upon one subject ; and the reader, like the sailor's horse, has at least the comfortable refreshment of having the spur often changed.

As I see no reason why they should carry off all the rewards of genius, I have some thoughts for the future of making this essay a magazine in miniature : I shall hop from subject to subject ; and, if properly encouraged, I intend in time to adorn my *feuille volant* with pictures. But to begin in the usual form with

A Modest Address to the Public.

The public has been so often imposed upon by the unperforming promises of others, that it is with the utmost modesty we assure them of our inviolable design of giving the very best collection that ever astonished society. The public we honour and regard, and therefore to instruct and entertain them is our highest ambition, with labours calculated as well for the head as the heart. If four extraordinary pages of letter-press be any recommendation of our wit, we may at least boast the honour of vindicating our own abilities. To say more in favour of the *Infernal Magazine*, would be unworthy the public ; to say less, would be injurious to ourselves. As we have no interested motives for this undertaking, being a society of gentlemen of distinction, we disdain to eat or write like hirelings ; we are all gentlemen, resolved to

sell our sixpenny magazine merely for our own amusement.

Be careful to ask for the Infernal Magazine.

*Dedication to that most ingenious of all Patrons,
the Tripoline Ambassador.*

May it please your EXCELLENCY,

As your taste in the fine arts is universally allowed and admired, permit the authors of the Infernal Magazine to lay the following sheets humbly at your Excellency's toe ; and should our labours ever have the happiness of one day adorning the courts of Fez, we doubt not that the influence wherewith we are honoured, shall be ever retained with the most warm ardour by,

May it please your Excellency,

Your most devoted humble servants,

The Authors of the INFERNAL MAGAZINE.

A Speech spoken by the Indigent Philosopher to persuade his Club at Cateaton to declare War against Spain.

My honest friends and brother politicians ; I perceive that the intended war with Spain makes many of you uneasy. Yesterday, as we were told, the stocks rose, and you were glad ; to-day they fall, and you are again miserable. But, my dear friends, what is the rising or the falling of the stocks to us, who have no money ? Let Nathan Ben Funk, the Dutch Jew, be glad or sorry for this ; but my good Mr. Bellows-mender, what is all

this to you or me ? You must mend broken bellows, and I write bad prose as long as we live, whether we like a Spanish war or not. Believe me, my honest friends, whatever you may talk of liberty and your own reason, both that liberty and reason are conditionally resigned by every poor man in every society ; and, as we are born to work, so others are born to watch over us while we are working. In the name of common sense then, my good friends, let the great keep watch over us, and let us mind our business, and perhaps we may at last get money ourselves, and set beggars at work in our turn. I have a Latin sentence that is worth its weight in gold, and which I shall beg leave to translate for your instruction. An author, called Lilly's Grammar, finely observes, that "Æs in præsentī perfectum format ;" that is, "Ready money makes a perfect man ;" let us then get ready money ; and let them that will spend theirs by going to war with Spain.

Rules for Behaviour, drawn up by the Indigent Philosopher.

If you be a rich man, you may enter the room with three loud hems, march deliberately up to the chimney, and turn your back to the fire. If you be a poor man, I would advise you to shrink into the room as fast as you can, and place yourself as usual upon a corner of a chair in a remote corner.

When you are desired to sing in company, I would advise you to refuse ; for it is a thousand to one but that you torment us with affectation or a bad voice.

If you be young, and live with an old man, I would advise you not to like gravy; I was disinherited myself for liking gravy.

Don't laugh much in public; the spectators that are not as merry as you, will hate you, either because they envy your happiness, or fancy themselves the subject of your mirth.

Rules for raising the Devil. Translated from the Latin of Danæus de Sortiariis, a Writer contemporary with Calvin, and one of the Reformers of our Church.

The person who desires to raise the devil, is to sacrifice a dog, a cat, and a hen, all of his own property, to Beelzebub. He is to swear an eternal obedience, and then to receive a mark in some unseen place, either under the eye-lid, or in the roof of the mouth, inflicted by the devil himself. Upon this he has power given him over three spirits; one for earth, another for air, and a third for the sea. Upon certain times the devil holds an assembly of magicians, in which each is to give an account of what evil he has done, and what he wishes to do. At this assembly he appears in the shape of an old man, or often like a goat with large horns. They upon this occasion renew their vows of obedience; and then form a grand dance in honour of their false deity. The devil instructs them in every method of injuring mankind, in gathering poisons, and of riding upon occasion through the air. He shows them the whole method, upon examination, of giving evasive answers; his spirits have power to assume the form of angels of light, and there is but

one method of detecting them; viz. to ask them in proper form, what method is the most certain to propagate the faith over all the world? To this they are not permitted by the Superior Power to make a false reply, nor are they willing to give the true one; wherefore they continue silent, and are thus detected.

III.

ASEM, AN EASTERN TALE.

WHERE Tauris lifts its head above the storm, and presents nothing to the sight of the distant traveller but a prospect of nodding rocks, falling torrents, and all the variety of tremendous nature; on the bleak bosom of this frightful mountain, secluded from society, and detesting the ways of men, lived Asem, the man-hater.

Asem had spent his youth with men; had shared in their amusements; and had been taught to love his fellow-creatures with the most ardent affection; but from the tenderness of his disposition he exhausted all his fortune in relieving the wants of the distressed. The petitioner never sued in vain; the weary traveller never passed his door; he only desisted from doing good when he had no longer the power of relieving.

From a fortune thus spent in benevolence, he expected a grateful return from those he had formerly relieved; and made his application with confidence of redress: the ungrateful world soon grew weary of his importunity; for pity is but a short lived pas-

sion. He soon therefore began to view mankind in a very different light from that in which he had before beheld them : he perceived a thousand vices he had never before suspected to exist : wherever he turned, ingratitude, dissimulation, and treachery contributed to increase his detestation of them. Resolved therefore to continue no longer in a world which he hated, and which repaid his detestation with contempt, he retired to this region of sterility, in order to brood over his resentment in solitude, and converse with the only honest heart he knew ; namely, with his own.

A cave was his only shelter from the inclemency of the weather ; fruits gathered with difficulty from the mountain's side his only food : and his drink was fetched with danger and toil from the headlong torrent. In this manner he lived, sequestered from society, passing the hours in meditation, and sometimes exulting that he was able to live independently of his fellow-creatures.

At the foot of the mountain an extensive lake displayed its glassy bosom ; reflecting on its broad surface the impending horrors of the mountain. To this capacious mirror he would sometimes descend, and reclining on its steep banks, cast an eager look on the smooth expanse that lay before him. " How beautiful," he often cried, " is nature ! how lovely even in her wildest scenes ! How finely contrasted is the level plain that lies beneath me, with yon awful pile that hides its tremendous head in clouds ! But the beauty of these scenes is no way comparable with their utility ; hence an hundred rivers are supplied, which distribute health and verdure to the various countries through which they flow.

Every part of the universe is beautiful, just, and wise, but man; vile man is a solecism in nature; the only monster in the creation. Tempests and whirlwinds have their use; but vicious ungrateful man is a blot in the fair page of universal beauty. Why was I born of that detested species, whose vices are almost a reproach to the wisdom of the divine Creator! Were men entirely free from vice, all would be uniformity, harmony, and order. A world of moral rectitude should be the result of a perfect moral agent. Why, why then, O Alla! must I be thus confined in darkness, doubt, and despair?"

Just as he uttered the word despair, he was going to plunge into the lake beneath him, at once to satisfy his doubts, and put a period to his anxiety; when he perceived a most majestic being walking on the surface of the water, and approaching the bank on which he stood. So unexpected an object at once checked his purpose; he stopped, contemplated, and fancied he saw something awful and divine in his aspect.

"Son of Adam," cried the genius, "stop thy rash purpose; the Father of the Faithful has seen thy justice, thy integrity, thy miseries, and hath sent me to afford and administer relief. Give me thine hand, and follow without trembling wherever I shall lead; in me behold the Genius of Conviction, kept by the Great Prophet, to turn from their errors those who go astray, not from curiosity, but a rectitude of intention. Follow me, and be wise."

Asem immediately descended upon the lake, and his guide conducted him along the surface of the water; till, coming near the centre of the lake,

they both began to sink ; the waters closed over their heads ; they descended several hundred fathoms, till Asem, just ready to give up his life as inevitably lost, found himself with his celestial guide in another world, at the bottom of the waters, where human foot had never trod before. His astonishment was beyond description, when he saw a sun like that he had left, a serene sky over his head, and blooming verdure under his feet.

“ I plainly perceive your amazement,” said the genius ; “ but suspend it for a while. This world was formed by Alla, at the request, and under the inspection, of our great Prophet ; who once entertained the same doubts which filled your mind when I found you, and from the consequence of which you were so lately rescued. The rational inhabitants of this world are formed agreeable to your own ideas ; they are absolutely without vice. In other respects it resembles your earth, but differs from it in being wholly inhabited by men who never do wrong. If you find this world more agreeable than that you so lately left, you have free permission to spend the remainder of your days in it ; but permit me for some time to attend you, that I may silence your doubts, and make you better acquainted with your company and your new habitation !”

“ A world without vice ! rational beings without immorality !” cried Asem in a rapture : “ I thank thee, O Alla, who hast at length heard my petitions : this, this indeed will produce happiness, ecstasy, and ease. O ! for an immortality, to spend it among men who are incapable of ingratitude,

injustice, fraud, violence, and a thousand other crimes, that render society miserable."

"Cease thine acclamations," replied the genius. "Look around thee; reflect on every object and action before us, and communicate to me the result of thine observations. Lead wherever you think proper, I shall be your attendant and instructor." Asem and his companion travelled on in silence for some time, the former being entirely lost in astonishment; but at last recovering his former serenity, he could not help observing that the face of the country bore a near resemblance to that he had left, except that this subterranean world still seemed to retain its primeval wildness.

"Here," cried Asem, "I perceive animals of prey, and others that seem only designed for their subsistence; it is the very same in the world over our heads. But had I been permitted to instruct our Prophet, I would have removed this defect, and formed no voracious or destructive animals, which only prey on the other parts of the creation." "Your tenderness for inferior animals is, I find, remarkable," said the genius, smiling: "but with regard to meaner creatures, this world exactly resembles the other; and indeed for obvious reasons; for the earth can support a more considerable number of animals, by their thus becoming food for each other, than if they had lived entirely on her vegetable productions. So that animals of different natures, thus formed, instead of lessening their multitude, subsist in the greatest number possible. But let us hasten on to the inhabited country before us, and see what that offers for instruction."

They soon gained the utmost verge of the forest, and entered the country inhabited by men without vice; and Asem anticipated in idea the rational delight he hoped to experience in such an innocent society. But they had scarcely left the confines of the wood, when they beheld one of the inhabitants flying with hasty steps, and terror in his countenance, from an army of squirrels that closely pursued him. "Heavens!" cried Asem, "why does he fly? What can he fear from animals so contemptible?" He had scarcely spoken, when he perceived two dogs pursuing another of the human species, who, with equal terror and haste, attempted to avoid them. "This," cried Asem to his guide, "is truly surprising; nor can I conceive the reason for so strange an action." "Every species of animals," replied the genius, "has of late grown very powerful in this country; for the inhabitants at first thinking it unjust to use either fraud or force in destroying them, they have insensibly increased, and now frequently ravage their harmless frontiers." "But they should have been destroyed," cried Asem; you see the consequence of such neglect." "Where is then that tenderness you so lately expressed for subordinate animals?" replied the genius, smiling; "you seem to have forgot that branch of justice." "I must acknowledge my mistake," returned Asem; "I am now convinced that we must be guilty of tyranny and injustice to the brute creation, if we would enjoy the world ourselves. But let us no longer observe the duty of man to these irrational creatures, but survey their connexions with one another."

As they walked further up the country, the more

he was surprised to see no vestiges of handsome houses, no cities, nor any mark of elegant design. His conductor perceiving his surprise, observed, that the inhabitants of this new world were perfectly content with their ancient simplicity; each had a house, which, though homely, was sufficient to lodge his little family; they were too good to build houses, which could only increase their own pride, and the envy of the spectator; what they built was for convenience, and not for show. "At least, then," said Asem, "they have neither architects, painters, nor statuaries, in their society; but these are idle arts, and may be spared. However, before I spend much more time, you should have my thanks for introducing me into the society of some of their wisest men: there is scarcely any pleasure to me equal to a refined conversation; there is nothing of which I am so much enamoured as wisdom." "Wisdom!" replied his instructor, "how ridiculous! We have no wisdom here, for we have no occasion for it; true wisdom is only a knowledge of our own duty, and the duty of others to us; but of what use is such wisdom here? each intuitively performs what is right in himself, and expects the same from others! If by wisdom you should mean vain curiosity, and empty speculation, as such pleasures have their origin in vanity, luxury, or avarice, we are too good to pursue them." "All this may be right," says Asem; "but methinks I observe a solitary disposition prevail among the people; each family keeps separately within their own precincts, without society, or without intercourse." "That indeed is true," replied the other: "here is no established society;

nor should there be any: all societies are made either through fear or friendship: the people we are among are too good to fear each other; and there are no motives to private friendship where all are equally meritorious." "Well, then," said the sceptic, "as I am to spend my time here, if I am to have neither the polite arts, nor wisdom, nor friendship, in such a world, I should be glad at least of an easy companion, who may tell me his thoughts, and to whom I may communicate mine." "And to what purpose should either do this?" says the genius: "flattery or curiosity are vicious motives, and never allowed of here; and wisdom is out of the question."

"Still, however," said Asem, "the inhabitants must be happy; each is contented with his own possessions, nor avariciously endeavours to heap up more than is necessary for his own subsistence: each has therefore leisure for pitying those that stand in need of his compassion." He had scarcely spoken, when his ears were assaulted with the lamentations of a wretch who sat by the way side, and in the most deplorable distress seemed gently to murmur at his own misery. Asem immediately ran to his relief, and found him in the last stage of a consumption. "Strange," cried the son of Adam, "that men who are free from vice should thus suffer so much misery without relief!" "Be not surprised," said the wretch who was dying; "would it not be the utmost injustice for beings, who have only just sufficient to support themselves, and are content with a bare subsistence, to take it from their own mouths to put it into mine? They never are possessed of a single meal more than is neces-

sary; and what is barely necessary cannot be dispensed with." "They should have been supplied with more than is necessary," cried Asem; "and yet I contradict my own opinion but a moment before: all is doubt, perplexity, and confusion. Even the want of ingratitude is no virtue here, since they never received a favour. They have, however, another excellence yet behind; the love of their country is still I hope one of their darling virtues." "Peace, Asem," replied the guardian, with a countenance not less severe than beautiful, "nor forfeit all thy pretensions to wisdom; the same selfish motives by which we prefer our own interest to that of others, induce us to regard our country preferably to that of another. Nothing less than universal benevolence is free from vice, and that you see is practised here." "Strange!" cries the disappointed pilgrim, in an agony of distress; what sort of a world am I now introduced to? There is scarcely a single virtue, but that of temperance, which they practise; and in that they are no way superior to the very brute creation. There is scarcely an amusement which they enjoy; fortitude, liberality, friendship, wisdom, conversation, and love of country, all are virtues entirely unknown here: thus it seems, that to be unacquainted with vice is not to know virtue. Take me, O my genius, back to that very world which I have despised; a world which has Alla for its contriver is much more wisely formed than that which has been projected by Mahomet. Ingratitude, contempt, and hatred, I can now suffer, for perhaps I have deserved them. When I arraigned the wisdom of Providence, I only showed my own ignorance;

henceforth let me keep from vice myself, and pity it in others."

He had scarcely ended, when the genius, assuming an air of terrible complacency, called all his thunders around him, and vanished in a whirlwind. Asem, astonished at the terror of the scene, looked for his imaginary world; when, casting his eyes around, he perceived himself in the very situation, and in the very place, where he first began to repine and despair; his right foot had been just advanced to take the fatal plunge, nor had it been yet withdrawn; so instantly did Providence strike the series of truths just imprinted on his soul. He now departed from the water-side in tranquillity, and, leaving his horrid mansion, travelled to Segestan, his native city, where he diligently applied himself to commerce, and put in practice that wisdom he had learned in solitude. The frugality of a few years soon produced opulence; the number of his domestics increased; his friends came to him from every part of the city; nor did he receive them with disdain: and a youth of misery was concluded with an old age of elegance, affluence, and ease.

IV.

ON THE ENGLISH CLERGY, AND POPULAR PREACHERS.

It is allowed on all hands, that our English divines receive a more liberal education, and improve that education by frequent study, more than any others

of this reverend profession in Europe. In general also it may be observed, that a greater degree of gentility is affixed to the character of a student in England than elsewhere; by which means our clergy have an opportunity of seeing better company while young, and of sooner wearing off those prejudices which they are apt to imbibe even in the best regulated universities, and which may be justly termed the vulgar errors of the wise.

Yet with all these advantages, it is very obvious, that the clergy are no where so little thought of by the populace, as here; and though our divines are foremost with respect to abilities, yet they are found last in the effects of their ministry; the vulgar in general appearing no way impressed with a sense of religious duty. I am not for whining at the depravity of the times, or for endeavouring to paint a prospect more gloomy than in nature; but certain it is, no person who has travelled will contradict me, when I aver, that the lower orders of mankind in other countries testify on every occasion the profoundest awe of religion; while in England they are scarcely awakened into a sense of its duties, even in circumstances of the greatest distress.

This dissolute and fearless conduct foreigners are apt to attribute to climate and constitution: may not the vulgar, being pretty much neglected in our exhortations from the pulpit, be a conspiring cause? Our divines seldom stoop to their mean capacities; and they who want instruction most, find least in our religious assemblies.

Whatever may become of the higher orders of mankind, who are generally possessed of collateral

motives to virtue, the vulgar should be particularly regarded, whose behaviour in civil life is totally hinged upon their hopes and fears. Those who constitute the basis of the great fabric of society should be particularly regarded; for in policy, as in architecture, ruin is most fatal when it begins from the bottom.

Men of real sense and understanding prefer a prudent mediocrity to a precarious popularity; and, fearing to outdo their duty, leave it half done. Their discourses from the pulpit are generally dry, methodical, and unaffecting; delivered with the most insipid calmness; insomuch, that, should the peaceful preacher lift his head over the cushion, which alone he seems to address, he might discover his audience, instead of being awakened to remorse, actually sleeping over his methodical and laboured composition.

This method of preaching is however by some called an address to reason, and not to the passions; this is styled the making of converts from conviction: but such are indifferently acquainted with human nature, who are not sensible, that men seldom reason about their debaucheries till they are committed; reason is but a weak antagonist when headlong passion dictates: in all such cases we should arm one passion against another: it is with the human mind as in nature; from the mixture of two opposites the result is most frequently neutral tranquillity. Those, who attempt to reason us out of our follies, begin at the wrong end, since the attempt naturally presupposes us capable of reason; but to be made capable of this is one great point of the cure.

There are but few talents requisite to become a popular preacher, for the people are easily pleased if they perceive any endeavours in the orator to please them; the meanest qualifications will work this effect, if the preacher sincerely sets about it. Perhaps little indeed, very little more is required, than sincerity and assurance; and a becoming sincerity is always certain of producing a becoming assurance. "*Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum tibi ipsi,*" is so trite a quotation, that it almost demands an apology to repeat it; yet, though all allow the justice of the remark, how few do we find put it in practice! our orators, with the most faulty bashfulness, seem impressed rather with an awe of their audience than with a just respect for the truths they are about to deliver; they, of all professions, seem the most bashful, who have the greatest right to glory in their commission.

The French preachers generally assume all the dignity which becomes men who are ambassadors from Christ: the English divines, like erroneous envoys, seem more solicitous not to offend the court to which they are sent, than to drive home the interest of their employer. The bishop of Massillon, in the first sermon he ever preached, found the whole audience, upon his getting into the pulpit, in a disposition no way favourable to his intentions; their nods, whispers, or drowsy behaviour, showed him that there was no great profit to be expected from his sowing in a soil so improper; however, he soon changed the disposition of his audience by his manner of beginning. "If," says he, "a cause, the most important that could be conceived, were to be tried at the bar before qualified

judges ; if this cause interested ourselves in particular ; if the eyes of the whole kingdom were fixed upon the event ; if the most eminent counsel were employed on both sides ; and if we had heard from our infancy of this yet undetermined trial ; would you not all sit with due attention, and warm expectation, to the pleadings on each side ? Would not all your hopes and fears be hinged upon the final decision ? And yet, let me tell you, you have this moment a cause of much greater importance before you ; a cause where not one nation, but all the world, are spectators ; tried not before a fallible tribunal, but the awful throne of Heaven ; where not your temporal and transitory interests are the subject of debate, but your eternal happiness or misery, where the cause is still undetermined ; but perhaps, the very moment I am speaking may fix the irrevocable decree that shall last for ever ; and yet, notwithstanding all this, you can hardly sit with patience to hear the tidings of your own salvation ; I plead the cause of Heaven, and I am scarcely attended to, &c."

The style, the abruptness of a beginning like this, in the closet would appear absurd ; but in the pulpit it is attended with the most lasting impressions ; that style, which in the closet might justly be called flimsy, seems the true mode of eloquence here. I never read a fine composition, under the title of a sermon, that I do not think the author has mis-called his piece ; for the talents to be used in writing well entirely differ from those of speaking well. The qualifications for speaking, as has been already observed, are easily acquired ; they are accomplishments which may be taken up by every

candidate who will be at the pains of stooping. Impressed with a sense of the truths he is about to deliver, a preacher disregards the applause or the contempt of his audience, and he insensibly assumes a just and manly sincerity. With this talent alone we see what crowds are drawn around enthusiasts, even destitute of common sense; what numbers converted to Christianity! Folly may sometimes set an example for wisdom to practise; and our regular divines may borrow instruction from even methodists, who go their circuits and preach prizes among the populace. Even Whitfield may be placed as a model to some of our young divines; let them join to their own good sense his earnest manner of delivery.

It will be perhaps objected, that by confining the excellencies of a preacher to proper assurance, earnestness, and openness of style, I make the qualifications too trifling for estimation: there will be something called oratory brought up on this occasion; action, attitude, grace, elocution, may be repeated as absolutely necessary to complete the character; but let us not be deceived; common-sense is seldom swayed by fine tones, musical periods, just attitudes, or the display of a white handkerchief; oratorical behaviour, except in very able hands indeed, generally sinks into awkward and paltry affectation.

It must be observed, however, that these rules are calculated only for him who would instruct the vulgar, who stand in most need of instruction; to address philosophers, and to obtain the character of a polite preacher among the polite—a much more useless, though more sought-for character—

requires a different method of proceeding. All I shall observe on this head is, to entreat the polemic divine, in his controversy with the Deists, to act rather offensively than to defend ; to push home the grounds of his belief, and the impracticability of theirs, rather than to spend time in solving the objections of every opponent. ' It is ten to one,' says a late writer on the art of war, ' but that the assailant, who attacks the enemy in his trenches, is always victorious.'

Yet, upon the whole, our clergy might employ themselves more to the benefit of society, by declining all controversy, than by exhibiting even the profoundest skill in polemic disputes ; their contests with each other often turn on speculative trifles ; and their disputes with the Deists are almost at an end, since they can have no more than victory, and that they are already possessed of, as their antagonists have been driven into a confession of the necessity of revelation, or an open avowal of atheism. To continue the dispute longer would only endanger it ; the sceptic is ever expert at puzzling a debate which he finds himself unable to continue ; " and, like an Olympic boxer, generally fights best when undermost."

V.

A REVERIE AT THE BOAR'S-HEAD TAVERN, EAST-CHEAP.

THE improvements we make in mental acquirements only render us each day more sensible of the

defects of our constitution ; with this in view therefore, let us often recur to the amusements of youth ; endeavour to forget age and wisdom, and as far as innocence goes, be as much a boy as the best of them.

Let idle declaimers mourn over the degeneracy of the age ; but in my opinion every age is the same. This I am sure of, that man in every season is a poor fretful being, with no other means to escape the calamities of the times, but by endeavouring to forget them ; for if he attempts to resist, he is certainly undone. If I feel poverty and pain, I am not so hardy as to quarrel with the executioner, even while under correction : I find myself no way disposed to make fine speeches, while I am making wry faces. In a word, let me drink when the fit is on, to make me insensible ; and drink when it is over, for joy that I feel pain no longer.

The character of old Falstaff, even with all his faults, gives me more consolation than the most studied efforts of wisdom : I here behold an agreeable old fellow, forgetting age, and showing me the way to be young at sixty-five. Sure I am well able to be as merry, though not so comical as he—Is it not in my power to have, though not so much wit, at least as much vivacity ?—Age, care, wisdom, reflection, begone—I give you to the winds. Let's have t'other bottle : here's to the memory of Shakspeare, Falstaff, and all the merry men of Eastcheap.

Such were the reflections that naturally arose while I sat at the Boar's-head tavern, still kept at Eastcheap. Here, by a pleasant fire, in the very room where old sir John Falstaff cracked his jokes,

in the very chair which was sometimes honoured by prince Henry, and sometimes polluted by his immoral, merry companions ; I sat and ruminated on the follies of youth ; wished to be young again ; but was resolved to make the best of life while it lasted, and now and then compared past and present times together. I considered myself as the only living representative of the old knight, and transported my imagination back to the times when the prince and he gave life to the revel, and made even debauchery not disgusting. The room also conspired to throw my reflections back into antiquity : the oak floor, the Gothic windows, and the ponderous chimney-piece, had long withstood the tooth of time ; the watchman had gone twelve ; my companions had all stolen off ; and none now remained with me but the landlord. From him I could have wished to know the history of a tavern, that had such a long succession of customers : I could not help thinking that an account of this kind would be a pleasing contrast of the manners of different ages ; but my landlord could give me no information. He continued to doze and sot, and tell a tedious story, as most other landlords usually do ; and, though he said nothing, yet was never silent : one good joke followed another good joke ; and the best joke of all was generally begun towards the end of a bottle. I found at last, however, his wine and his conversation operate by degrees : he insensibly began to alter his appearance. His cravat seemed quilled into a ruff, and his breeches swelled out into a fardingale. I now fancied him changing sexes ; and as my eyes began to close in

slumber, I imagined my fat landlord actually converted into as fat a landlady. However, sleep made but few changes in my situation; the tavern, the apartment, and the table, continued as before; nothing suffered mutation but my host, who was fairly altered into a gentlewoman, whom I knew to be dame Quickly, mistress of this tavern in the days of sir John; and the liquor we were drinking, which seemed converted into sack and sugar.

"My dear Mrs. Quickly," cried I (for I knew her perfectly well at first sight) "I am heartily glad to see you. How have you left Falstaff, Pistol, and the rest of our friends below stairs? Brave and hearty I hope!" "In good sooth," replied she, "he did deserve to live for ever; but he maketh foul work on't where he hath flitted. Queen Proserpine and he have quarrelled for his attempting a rape upon her divinity; and were it not that she still had bowels of compassion, it more than seems probable he might have been now sprawling in Tartarus."

I now found that spirits still preserve the frailties of the flesh; and that, according to the laws of criticism and dreaming, ghosts have been known to be guilty of even more than platonic affection: wherefore, as I found her too much moved on such a topic to proceed, I was resolved to change the subject; and desiring she would pledge me in a bumper, observed with a sigh, that our sack was nothing now to what it was in former days: "Ah, Mrs. Quickly, those were merry times when you drew sack for prince Henry; men were twice as strong, and twice as wise, and much braver, and

ten thousand times more charitable than now. Those were the times ! The battle of Agincourt was a victory indeed ! Ever since that we have only been degenerating ; and I have lived to see the day when drinking is no longer fashionable. When men wear clean shirts, and women show their necks and arms : all are degenerated, Mrs. Quickly ; and we shall probably, in another century, be frittered away into beaus or monkeys. Had you been on earth to see what I have seen, it would congeal all the blood in your body (your soul I mean.) Why, our very nobility now have the intolerable arrogance, in spite of what is every day remonstrated from the press ; our very nobility, I say, have the assurance to frequent assemblies, and presume to be as merry as the vulgar. See, my very friends have scarcely manhood enough to sit to it till eleven ; and I only am left to make a night on't. Prythee do me the favour to console me a little for their absence by the story of your own adventure, or the history of the tavern where we are now sitting : I fancy the narrative may have something singular."

"Observe this apartment," interrupted my companion, "of neat device and excellent workmanship — In this room I have lived, child, woman, and ghost, more than three hundred years : I am ordered by Pluto to keep an annual register of every transaction that passeth here ; and I have whilom compiled three hundred tomes, which eftsoons may be submitted to thy regards." — "None of your whiloms or eftsoons, Mrs. Quickly, if you please," I replied ; "I know you can talk every whit as well as I can ; for, as you have lived here so long, it is but

natural to suppose you should learn the conversation of the company. Believe me, dame, at best, you have neither too much sense, nor too much language to spare; so give me both as well as you can; but first my service to you: old women should water their clay a little now and then; and now to your story."

"The story of my own adventures," replied the vision, "is but short and unsatisfactory; for believe me, Mr. Rigmarole, believe me, a woman with a butt of sack at her elbow is never long-lived. Sir John's death afflicted me to such a degree, that I sincerely believe, to drown sorrow, I drank more liquor myself than I drew for my customers; my grief was sincere, and the sack was excellent. The prior of a neighbouring convent (for our priors then had as much power as a Middlesex justice now) he, I say, it was who gave me a licence for keeping a disorderly house; upon conditions I should never make hard bargains with the clergy, that he should have a bottle of sack every morning, and the liberty of confessing which of my girls he thought proper in private every night. I had continued for several years to pay this tribute; and he, it must be confessed, continued as rigorously to exact it. I grew old insensibly; my customers continued, however, to compliment my looks while I was by, but I could hear them say I was wearing, when my back was turned. The prior however still was constant, and so were half his convent; but one fatal morning he missed the usual beverage; for I had incautiously drank over-night the last bottle myself. What will you have on't? The very next day Doll Tearsheet and I were sent to the house of correction, and

accused of keeping a low bawdy-house. In short, we were so well purified there with stripes, mortification, and penance, that we were afterwards utterly unfit for worldly conversation: though sack would have killed me, had I stuck to it; yet I soon died for want of a drop of something comfortable, and fairly left my body to the care of the beadle.

“Such is my own history; but that of the tavern, where I have ever since been stationed, affords greater variety. In the history of this, which is one of the oldest in London, you may view the different manners, pleasures, and follies, of men at different periods. You will find mankind neither better nor worse now than formerly: the vices of an uncivilized people are generally more detestable, though not so frequent, as those in polite society. It is the same luxury, which formerly stuffed your alderman with plum-porridge, and now crams him with turtle. It is the same low ambition, that formerly induced a courtier to give up his religion to please his king, and now persuades him to give up his conscience to please his minister. It is the same vanity, that formerly stained our ladies' cheeks and necks with woad, and now paints them with carmine. Your ancient Briton formerly powdered his hair with red earth, like brick-dust, in order to appear frightful: your modern Briton cuts his hair on the crown, and plasters it with hogs-lard and flour; and this to make him look killing. It is the same vanity, the same folly, and the same vice, only appearing different, as viewed through the glass of fashion. In a word, all mankind are a——”

“Sure the woman is dreaming,” interrupted I.

"None of your reflections, Mrs. Quickly, if you love me; they only give me the spleen. Tell me your history at once. I love stories, but hate reasoning."

"If you please then, sir," returned my companion, "I'll read you an abstract, which I made of the three hundred volumes I mentioned just now."

"My body was no sooner laid in the dust, than the prior and several of his convent came to purify the tavern from the pollutions with which they said I had filled it. Masses were said in every room, reliques were exposed upon every piece of furniture, and the whole house washed with a deluge of holy water. My habitation was soon converted into a monastery: instead of customers now applying for sack and sugar, my rooms were crowded with images, reliques, saints, whores, and friars. Instead of being a scene of occasional debauchery, it was now filled with continual lewdness. The prior led the fashion, and the whole convent imitated his pious example. Matrons came hither to confess their sins, and to commit new. Virgins came hither who seldom went virgins away. Nor was this a convent peculiarly wicked; every convent at that period was equally fond of pleasure, and gave a boundless loose to appetite. The laws allowed it; each priest had a right to a favourite companion, and a power of discarding her as often as he pleased. The laity grumbled, quarrelled with their wives and daughters, hated their confessors, and maintained them in opulence and ease. These, these, were happy times, Mr. Rigmarole; these were times of piety, bravery, and simplicity!"—"Not so very happy neither, good madam! pretty much like the present;

those that labour starve; and those that do nothing wear fine clothes, and live in luxury."

"In this manner the fathers lived for some years without molestation; they transgressed, confessed themselves to each other, and were forgiven. One evening, however, our prior keeping a lady of distinction somewhat too long at confession, her husband unexpectedly came upon them, and testified all the indignation which was natural upon such an occasion. The prior assured the gentleman, that it was the devil who put it into his heart; and the lady was very certain that she was under the influence of magic, or she could never have behaved in so unfaithful a manner. The husband, however, was not to be put off by such evasions, but summoned both before the tribunal of justice. His proofs were flagrant, and he expected large damages. Such indeed he had a right to expect, were the tribunals of those days constituted in the same manner as they are now. The cause of the priest was to be tried before an assembly of priests; and a layman was to expect redress only from their impartiality and candour. What plea then do you think the prior made to obviate this accusation? He denied the fact, and challenged the plaintiff to try the merits of their cause by single combat. It was a little hard, you may be sure, upon the poor gentleman, not only to be made a cuckold, but to be obliged to fight a duel into the bargain; yet such was the justice of the times. The prior threw down his glove, and the injured husband was obliged to take it up, in token of his accepting the challenge. Upon this the priest supplied his champion, for it was not lawful for the clergy to

fight ; and the defendant and plaintiff, according to custom, were put in prison ; both ordered to fast and pray, every method being previously used to induce both to a confession of the truth. After a month's imprisonment, the hair of each was cut, the bodies anointed with oil, the field of battle appointed and guarded by soldiers, while his majesty presided over the whole in person. Both the champions were sworn not to seek victory either by fraud or magic. They prayed and confessed upon their knees ; and after these ceremonies the rest was left to the courage and conduct of the combatants. As the champion whom the prior had pitched upon had fought six or eight times upon similar occasions, it was no way extraordinary to find him victorious in the present combat. In short, the husband was discomfited ; he was taken from the field of battle, stripped to his shirt, and after one of his legs had been cut off, as justice ordained in such cases, he was hanged as a terror to future offenders. These, these were the times, Mr. Rigmarole ; you see how much more just, and wise, and valiant, our ancestors were than us."—"I rather fancy, madam, that the times then were pretty much like our own : where a multiplicity of laws gives a judge as much power as a want of law ; since he is ever sure to find among the number some to countenance his partiality."

"Our convent, victorious over their enemies, now gave a loose to every demonstration of joy. The lady became a nun, the prior was made a bishop, and three Wickliffites were burned in the illuminations and fire-works that were made on the present occasion. Our convent now began to enjoy a very

high degree of reputation. There was not one in London that had the character of hating heretics so much as ours. Ladies of the first distinction chose from our convent their confessors ; in short, it flourished, and might have flourished to this hour, but for a fatal accident which terminated in its overthrow. The lady, whom the prior had placed in a nunnery, and whom he continued to visit for some time with great punctuality, began at last to perceive that she was quite forsaken. Secluded from conversation, as usual, she now entertained the visions of a devotee, found herself strangely disturbed, but hesitated in determining whether she was possessed by an angel or a demon. She was not long in suspense ; for upon vomiting a large quantity of crooked pins, and finding the palms of her hands turned outwards, she quickly concluded that she was possessed by the devil. She soon lost entirely the use of speech ; and when she seemed to speak, every body that was present perceived that her voice was not her own, but that of the devil within her. In short, she was bewitched ; and all the difficulty lay in determining who it could be that bewitched her. The nuns and the monks all demanded the magician's name, but the devil made no reply ; for he knew they had no authority to ask questions. By the rules of witchcraft, when an evil spirit has taken possession, he may refuse to answer any questions asked him, unless they are put by a bishop, and to these he is obliged to reply. A bishop therefore was sent for, and now the whole secret came out : the devil reluctantly owned that he was a servant of the prior ; that by his command he resided in his present habitation, and that without his

command he was resolved to keep in possession. The bishop was an able exorcist ; he drove the devil out by force of mystical arms ; the prior was arraigned for witchcraft ; the witnesses were strong and numerous against him, not less than fourteen persons being by, who heard the devil talk Latin. There was no resisting such a cloud of witnesses ; the prior was condemned ; and he who had assisted at so many burnings, was burned himself in turn. These were times, Mr. Rigmarole : the people of those times were not infidels, as now, but sincere believers !"—" Equally faulty with ourselves : they believed what the devil was pleased to tell them ; and we seem resolved at last to believe neither God nor devil."

" After such a stain upon the convent, it was not to be supposed it could subsist any longer ; the fathers were ordered to decamp, and the house was once again converted into a tavern. The king conferred it on one of his cast mistresses ; she was constituted landlady by royal authority ; and as the tavern was in the neighbourhood of the court, and the mistress a very polite woman, it began to have more business than ever, and sometimes took not less than four shillings a day.

" But perhaps you are desirous of knowing what were the peculiar qualifications of a woman of fashion at that period ; and in a description of the present landlady you will have a tolerable idea of all the rest. This lady was the daughter of a nobleman, and received such an education in the country as became her quality, beauty, and great expectations. She could make shifts and hose for herself and all the servants of the family when she was

twelve years old. She knew the names of the four and twenty letters, so that it was impossible to bewitch her; and this was a greater piece of learning than any lady in the whole country could pretend to. She was always up early, and saw breakfast served in the great hall by six o'clock. At this scene of festivity she generally improved good humour, by telling her dreams, relating stories of spirits, several of which she herself had seen; and one of which she was reported to have killed with a black-hafted knife. Hence she usually went to make pastry in the larder, and here she was followed by her sweethearts, who were much helped on in conversation by struggling with her for kisses. About ten miss generally went to play at hot-cockles and blindman's buff in the parlour; and when the young folks (for they seldom played at hot-cockles when grown old) were tired of such amusements, the gentlemen entertained miss with the history of their greyhounds, bear-baitings, and victories at cudgel-playing. If the weather was fine, they ran at the ring, shot at butts; while miss held in her hand a ribbon, with which she adorned the conqueror. Her mental qualifications were exactly fitted to her external accomplishments. Before she was fifteen, she could tell the story of Jack the Giant Killer, could name every mountain that was inhabited by fairies, knew a witch at first sight, and could repeat four Latin prayers without a prompter. Her dress was perfectly fashionable; her arms and her hair were completely covered; a monstrous ruff was put round her neck, so that her head seemed like that of John the Baptist placed in a charger. In short, when completely equipped, her appear-

ance was so very modest, that she discovered little more than her nose. These were the times, Mr. Rigmarole, when every lady that had a good nose might set up for a beauty; when every woman that could tell stories might be cried up for a wit."—"I am as much displeased at those dresses which conceal too much, as at those which discover too much: I am equally an enemy to a female dunce or a female pedant."

"You may be sure that miss chose a husband with qualifications resembling her own; she pitched upon a courtier, equally remarkable for hunting and drinking, who had given several proofs of his great virility among the daughters of his tenants and domestics. They fell in love at first sight (for such was the gallantry of the times) were married, came to court, and madam appeared with superior qualifications. The king was struck with her beauty. All property was at the king's command; the husband was obliged to resign all pretensions in his wife to the sovereign, whom God had anointed to commit adultery where he thought proper. The king loved her for some time; but at length repenting of his misdeeds, and instigated by his father-confessor, from a principle of conscience removed her from his levee to the bar of this tavern, and took a new mistress in her stead. Let it not surprise you to behold the mistress of a king degraded to so humble an office. As the ladies had no mental accomplishments, a good face was enough to raise them to the royal couch; and she, who was this day a royal mistress, might the next, when her beauty palled upon enjoyment, be doomed to infamy and want.

“Under the care of this lady the tavern grew into great reputation ; the courtiers had not yet learned to game, but they paid it off by drinking : drunkenness is ever the vice of a barbarous, and gaming of a luxurious age. They had not such frequent entertainments as the moderns have, but were more expensive and more luxurious in those they had. All their fooleries were more elaborate, and more admired by the great and the vulgar than now. A courtier has been known to spend his whole fortune at a single feast, a king to mortgage his dominions to furnish out the frippery of a tournament. There were certain days appointed for riot and debauchery, and to be sober at such times was reputed a crime. Kings themselves set the example ; and I have seen monarchs in this room drunk before the entertainment was half concluded. These were the times, sir, when kings kept mistresses, and got drunk in public ; they were too plain and simple in those happy times to hide their vices, and act the hypocrite, as now.”—“Lord ! Mrs. Quickly,” interrupting her, “I expected to have heard a story, and here you are going to tell me I know not what of times and vices ; pr’ythee let me entreat thee once more to wave reflections, and give thy history without deviation.”

“No lady upon earth,” continued my visionary correspondent, “knew how to put off her damaged wine or women with more art than she. When these grew flat, or those paltry, it was but changing the names ; the wine became excellent, and the girls agreeable. She was also possessed of the engaging leer, the chuck under the chin, winked at a double-entendre, could nick the opportunity of call-

ing for something comfortable, and perfectly understood the discreet moments when to withdraw. The gallants of these times pretty much resembled the bloods of ours; they were fond of pleasure, but quite ignorant of the art of refining upon it; thus a court-bawd of those times resembled the common low-lived harridan of a modern bagnio. Witness, ye powers of debauchery, how often I have been present at the various appearances of drunkenness, riot, guilt, and brutality! A tavern is the true picture of human infirmity: in history we find only one side of the age exhibited to our view; but in the accounts of a tavern we see every age equally absurd and equally vicious.

“ Upon this lady's decease, the tavern was successively occupied by adventurers, bullies, pimps, and gamesters. Towards the conclusion of the reign of Henry VII. gaming was more universally practised in England than even now. Kings themselves have been known to play off at primero, not only all the money and jewels they could part with, but the very images in churches. The last Henry played away, in this very room, not only the four great bells of St. Paul's cathedral, but the fine image of St. Paul, which stood upon the top of the spire, to Sir Miles Partridge, who took them down the next day, and sold them by auction. Have you then any cause to regret being born in the times you now live? or do you still believe that human nature continues to run on declining every age? If we observe the actions of the busy part of mankind, your ancestors will be found infinitely more gross, servile, and even dishonest, than you. If, forsaking history, we only trace them in their hours of amuse-

ment and dissipation, we shall find them more sensual, more entirely devoted to pleasure, and infinitely more selfish.

- "The last hostess of note I find upon record was Jane Rouse. She was born among the lower ranks of the people; and by frugality and extreme complaisance contrived to acquire a moderate fortune: this she might have enjoyed for many years, had she not unfortunately quarrelled with one of her neighbours, a woman who was in high repute for sanctity through the whole parish. In the times of which I speak, two women seldom quarrelled that one did not accuse the other of witchcraft, and she who first contrived to vomit crooked pins was sure to come off victorious. The scandal of a modern tea-table differs widely from the scandal of former times: the fascination of a lady's eyes at present is regarded as a compliment; but if a lady formerly should be accused of having witchcraft in her eyes, it were much better both for her soul and body that she had no eyes at all.

"In short, Jane Rouse was accused of witchcraft; and though she made the best defence she could, it was all to no purpose; she was taken from her own bar to the bar of the Old Bailey, condemned, and executed accordingly. These were times indeed! when even women could not scold in safety.

"Since her time, the tavern underwent several revolutions, according to the spirit of the times, or the disposition of the reigning monarch. It was this day a brothel, and the next a conventicle for enthusiasts. It was one year noted for harbouring Whigs, and the next infamous for a retreat to Tories. Some years ago it was in high vogue, but at present it

seems declining. This only may be remarked in general, that whenever taverns flourish most, the times are the most extravagant and luxurious."——
“Lord! Mrs. Quickly,” interrupted I, “you have really deceived me: I expected a romance, and here you have been this half hour giving me only a description of the spirit of the times: if you have nothing but tedious remarks to communicate, seek some other hearer; I am determined to hearken only to stories.”

I had scarcely concluded, when my eyes and ears seemed open to my landlord, who had been all this while giving me an account of the repairs he had made in the house, and was now got into the story of the cracked glass in the dining-room.

VI.

ADVENTURES OF A STROLLING PLAYER.

I AM fond of amusement in whatever company it is to be found; and wit, though dressed in rags, is ever pleasing to me. I went some days ago to take a walk in St. James's Park, about the hour in which company leave it to go to dinner. There were but few in the walks, and those who stayed seemed by their looks rather more willing to forget that they had an appetite than gain one. I sat down on one of the benches, at the other end of which was seated a man in very shabby clothes.

We continued to groan, to hem, and to cough, as usual upon such occasions, and at last ventured upon conversation. “I beg pardon, sir,” cried I,

“but I think I have seen you before; your face is familiar to me.”—“Yes, sir,” replied he, “I have a good familiar face, as my friends tell me. I am as well known in every town in England as the dromedary or live crocodile. You must understand, sir, that I have been these sixteen years Merry Andrew to a puppet-show; last Bartholomew fair my master and I quarrelled, beat each other, and parted; he to sell his puppets to the pincushion-makers in Rosemary-lane, and I to starve in St. James’s Park.”

“I am sorry, sir, that a person of your appearance should labour under any difficulties.”—“O sir,” returned he, “my appearance is very much at your service; but though I cannot boast of eating much, yet there are few that are merrier: if I had twenty thousand a year I should be very merry; and, thank the Fates, though not worth a groat, I am very merry still. If I have three-pence in my pocket, I never refused to be my three halfpence; and if I have no money, I never scorn to be treated by any that are kind enough to pay my reckoning. What think you, sir, of a steak and a tankard? You shall treat me now; and I will treat you again when I find you in the park in love with eating, and without money to pay for a dinner.”

As I never refuse a small expense for the sake of a merry companion, we instantly adjourned to a neighbouring ale-house, and in a few moments had a frothing tankard, and a smoking steak spread on the table before us. It is impossible to express how much the sight of such good cheer improved my companion’s vivacity. “I like this dinner, sir,” says he, “for three reasons: first, because I am

naturally fond of beef ; secondly, because I am hungry ; and, thirdly and lastly, because I get it for nothing : no meat eats so sweet as that for which we do not pay."

He therefore now fell-to, and his appetite seemed to correspond with his inclination. After dinner was over, he observed that the steak was tough ; "and yet, sir," returns he, "bad as it was, it seemed a rump-steak to me. O the delights of poverty and a good appetite ! We beggars are the very foundlings of nature ; the rich she treats like an arrant step-mother ; they are pleased with nothing ; cut a steak from what part you will, and it is insupportably tough ; dress it up with pickles, and even pickles cannot procure them an appetite. But the whole creation is filled with good things for the beggar ; Calvert's butt out-tastes Champagne, and Sedgeley's home-brewed excels Tokay. Joy, joy, my blood, though our estates lie no where, we have fortunes wherever we go. If an inundation sweeps away half the grounds of Cornwall, I am content ; I have no lands there : if the stocks sink, that gives me no uneasiness ; I am no Jew." The fellow's vivacity, joined to his poverty, I own, raised my curiosity to know something of his life and circumstances ; and I entreated that he would indulge my desire.— "That I will, sir," said he, "and welcome ; only let us drink to prevent our sleeping ; let us have another tankard while we are awake ; let us have another tankard ; for, ah, how charming a tankard looks when full !

"You must know, then, that I am very well descended ; my ancestors have made some noise in the world ; for my mother cried oysters, and my

father beat a drum: I am told we have even had some trumpeters in our family. Many a nobleman cannot show so respectful a genealogy; but that is neither here nor there: as I was their only child, my father designed to breed me up to his own employment, which was that of a drummer to a puppet-show. Thus the whole employment of my younger years was that of interpreter to Punch and king Solomon in all his glory. But though my father was very fond of instructing me in beating all the marches and points of war, I made no very great progress, because I naturally had no ear for music; so at the age of fifteen I went and listed for a soldier. As I had ever hated beating a drum, so I soon found that I disliked carrying a musket also; neither the one trade nor the other were to my taste, for I was by nature fond of being a gentleman; besides, I was obliged to obey my captain; he has his will, I have mine, and you have yours: now I very reasonably concluded, that it was much more comfortable for a man to obey his own will than another's.

“The life of a soldier soon therefore gave me the spleen; I asked leave to quit the service; but as I was tall and strong, my captain thanked me for my kind intention, and said, because he had a regard for me, we should not part. I wrote to my father a very dismal penitent letter, and desired that he would raise money to pay for my discharge; but the good man was as fond of drinking as I was (sir, my service to you), and those who are fond of drinking never pay for other people's discharges: in short he never answered my letter. What could be done? If I have not money, said I to myself, to

pay for my discharge, I must find an equivalent some other way : and that must be by running away. I deserted, and that answered my purpose every bit as well as if I had bought my discharge.

“ Well, I was now fairly rid of my military employment ; I sold my soldier’s clothes, bought worse, and, in order not to be overtaken, took the most unfrequented roads possible. One evening as I was entering a village, I perceived a man, whom I afterwards found to be the curate of the parish, thrown from his horse in a miry road, and almost smothered in the mud. He desired my assistance ; I gave it, and drew him out with some difficulty. He thanked me for my trouble, and was going off ; but I followed him home, for I loved always to have a man thank me at his own door. The curate asked an hundred questions ; and whose son I was ; from whence I came ? and whether I would be faithful ? I answered him greatly to his satisfaction ; and gave myself one of the best characters in the world for sobriety, (sir, I have the honour of drinking your health) discretion, and fidelity. To make a long story short, he wanted a servant, and hired me. With him I lived but two months ; we did not much like each other ; I was fond of eating, and he gave me but little to eat ; I loved a pretty girl, and the old woman, my fellow servant, was ill-natured and ugly. As they endeavoured to starve me between them, I made a pious resolution to prevent their committing murder ; I stole the eggs as soon as they were laid ; I emptied every unfinished bottle that I could lay my hands on ; whatever eatable came in my way was sure to disappear ; in short, they found I would not do ; so I was dis-

charged one morning, and paid three shillings and sixpence for two months' wages.

"While my money was getting ready, I employed myself in making preparations for my departure; two hens were hatching in an out-house, I went and took the eggs from habit, and not to separate the parents from the children, I lodged hens and all in my knapsack. After this piece of frugality, I returned to receive my money, and with my knapsack on my back, and a staff in my hand, I bid adieu with tears in my eyes to my old benefactor. I had not gone far from the house, when I heard behind me the cry of stop thief! but this only increased my dispatch; it would have been foolish to stop, as I knew the voice could not be levelled at me. But hold, I think I passed those two months at the curate's without drinking. Come, the times are dry, and may this be my poison if ever I spent two more pious, stupid months, in all my life!

"Well, after travelling some days, whom should I light upon but a company of strolling players. The moment I saw them at a distance my heart warmed to them; I had a sort of natural love for every thing of the vagabond order: they were employed in settling their baggage, which had been overturned in a narrow way; I offered my assistance, which they accepted; and we soon became so well acquainted, that they took me as a servant. This was a paradise to me; they sung, danced, drank, eat, and travelled, all at the same time. By the blood of the Mirabels, I thought I had never lived till then. I grew as merry as a grig, and laughed at every word that was spoken. They

liked me as much as I liked them ; I was a very good figure, as you see ; and, though I was poor, I was not modest.

“I love a straggling life above all things in the world ; sometimes good, sometimes bad ; to be warm to-day, and cold to-morrow ; to eat when one can get it, and drink when (the tankard is out) it stands before me. We arrived that evening at Tenterden, and took a large room at the Greyhound, where we resolved to exhibit *Romeo and Juliet*, with the funeral procession, the grave, and the garden-scene. *Romeo* was to be performed by a gentleman from the Theatre-Royal in Drury-lane ; *Juliet*, by a lady who had never appeared on any stage before ; and I was to snuff the candles : all excellent in our way. We had figures enough, but the difficulty was to dress them. The same coat that served *Romeo*, turned with a blue lining outwards, served for his friend *Mercutio* : a large piece of crape sufficed at once for *Juliet*'s petticoat and pall : a pestle and mortar from a neighbouring apothecary's answered all the purposes of a bell ; and our landlord's own family, wrapped in white sheets, served to fill up the procession. In short, there were but three figures among us that might be said to be dressed with any propriety ; I mean the nurse, the starved apothecary, and myself. Our performance gave universal satisfaction : the whole audience were enchanted with our powers.

“There is one rule by which a strolling-player may be ever secure of success ; that is, in our theatrical way of expressing it, to make a great deal of the character. To speak and act as in common

life, is not playing, nor is it what people come to see ; natural speaking, like sweet wine, runs glibly over the palate, and scarcely leaves any taste behind it ; but being high in a part resembles vinegar, which grates upon the taste, and one feels it while he is drinking. To please in town or country, the way is to cry, wring, cringe into attitudes, mark the emphasis, slap the pockets, and labour like one in the falling sickness : that is the way to work for applause ; that is the way to gain it.

“ As we received much reputation for our skill on this first exhibition, it was but natural for me to ascribe part of the success to myself ; I snuffed the candles, and let me tell you, that without a candle-snuffer the piece would lose half its embellishments. In this manner we continued a fortnight, and drew tolerable houses ; but the evening before our intended departure, we gave out our very best piece, in which all our strength was to be exerted. We had great expectations from this, and even doubled our prices, when behold one of the principal actors fell ill of a violent fever. This was a stroke like thunder to our little company : they were resolved to go in a body, to scold the man for falling sick at so inconvenient a time, and that too of a disorder that threatened to be expensive ; I seized the moment, and offered to act the part myself in his stead. The case was desperate : they accepted my offer ; and I accordingly sat down, with the part in my hand and a tankard before me, (sir, your health), and studied the character, which was to be rehearsed the next day, and played soon after.

“ I found my memory excessively helped by drinking : I learned my part with astonishing rapidity,

and bid adieu to snuffing candles ever after. I found that nature had designed me for more noble employments, and I was resolved to take her when in the humour. We got together in order to rehearse: and I informed my companions, masters now no longer, of the surprising change I felt within me. Let the sick man, said I, be under no uneasiness to get well again; I'll fill his place to universal satisfaction; he may even die if he thinks proper; I'll engage that he shall never be missed. I rehearsed before them, strutted, ranted, and received applause. They soon gave out, that a new actor of eminence was to appear, and immediately all the genteel places were bespoke. Before I ascended the stage, however, I concluded within myself, that, as I brought money to the house, I ought to have my share in the profits. Gentlemen, said I, addressing our company, I don't pretend to direct you; far be it from me to treat you with so much ingratitude: you have published my name in the bills with the utmost good-nature, and as affairs stand, cannot act without me: so gentlemen, to show you my gratitude, I expect to be paid for my acting as much as any of you, otherwise I declare off. I'll brandish my snuffers, and clip candles as usual. This was a very disagreeable proposal, but they found that it was impossible to refuse it; it was irresistible, it was adamant: they consented, and I went on in king Bajazet: my frowning brows, bound with a stocking stuffed into a turban, while on my captived arms I brandished a jack-chain. Nature seemed to have fitted me for the part; I was tall, and had a loud voice; my very entrance excited

universal applause; I looked round on the audience with a smile, and made a most low and graceful bow, for that is the rule among us. As it was a very passionate part, I invigorated my spirits with three full glasses (the tankard is almost out) of brandy. By Alla! it is almost inconceivable how I went through it; Tamerlane was but a fool to me; though he was sometimes loud enough too, yet I was still louder than he: but then, besides, I had attitudes in abundance: in general I kept my arms folded up thus, upon the pit of my stomach; it is the way at Drury-lane, and has always a fine effect. The tankard would sink to the bottom before I could get through the whole of my merits: in short, I came off like a prodigy; and such was my success, that I could ravish the laurels even from a sirloin of beef. The principal gentlemen and ladies of the town came to me, after the play was over, to compliment me upon my success; one praised my voice, another my person. 'Upon my word,' says the squire's lady, 'he will make one of the finest actors in Europe; I say it, and I think I am something of a judge.'—Praise in the beginning is agreeable enough, and we receive it as a favour; but when it comes in great quantities, we regard it only as a debt, which nothing but our merit could extort: instead of thanking them, I internally applauded myself. We were desired to give our piece a second time; we obeyed; and I was applauded even more than before.

"At last we left the town, in order to be at a horse-race at some distance from thence. I shall never think of Tenterden without tears of gratitude and respect. The ladies and gentlemen there,

take my word for it, are very good judges of plays and actors. Come, let us drink their healths, if you please, sir. We quitted the town, I say; and there was a wide difference between my coming in and going out; I entered the town a candle-snuffer, and I quitted it an hero!—Such is the world; little to-day, and great to-morrow. I could say a great deal more upon that subject, something truly sublime, upon the ups and downs of fortune; but it would give us both the spleen, and so I shall pass it over.

“ The races were ended before we arrived at the next town, which was no small disappointment to our company; however, we were resolved to take all we could get. I played capital characters there too, and came off with my usual brilliancy. I sincerely believe I should have been the first actor of Europe, had my growing merit been properly cultivated; but there came an unkindly frost which nipped me in the bud, and levelled me once more down to the common standard of humanity. I played sir Harry Wildair; all the country ladies were charmed; if I but drew out my snuff-box the whole house was in a roar of rapture; when I exercised my cudgel, I thought they would have fallen into convulsions.

“ There was here a lady who had received an education of nine months in London; and this gave her pretensions to taste, which rendered her the indisputable mistress of the ceremonies wherever she came. She was informed of my merits; every body praised me; yet she refused at first going to see me perform; she could not conceive, she said, any thing but stuff from a stroller; talked

something in praise of Garrick, and amazed the ladies with her skill in enunciations, tones, and cadences ; she was at last however prevailed upon to go ; and it was privately intimated to me what a judge was to be present at my next exhibition : however, no way intimidated, I came on in sir Harry, one hand stuck in my breeches, and the other in my bosom, as usual at Drury-lane ; but instead of looking at me, I perceived the whole audience had their eyes turned upon the lady who had been nine months in London ; from her they expected the decision which was to secure the general's truncheon in my hand, or sink me down into a theatrical letter-carrier. I opened my snuff-box, took snuff ; the lady was solemn, and so were the rest ; I broke my cudgel on Alderman Smuggler's back ; still gloomy, melancholy all, the lady groaned and shrugged her shoulders. I attempted by laughing myself, to excite at least a smile, but the devil a cheek could I perceive wrinkled into sympathy : I found it would not do ; all my good-humour now became forced ; my laughter was converted into hysteric grinning ; and while I pretended spirits, my eye showed the agony of my heart : in short, the lady came with an intention to be displeased, and displeased she was ; my fame expired ; I am here, and (the tankard is no more !)"

VII.

RULES ENJOINED TO BE OBSERVED AT A RUSSIAN
ASSEMBLY.

WHEN Catharina Alexowna was made empress of Russia, the women were in an actual state of bondage, but she undertook to introduce mixed assemblies, as in other parts of Europe: she altered the women's dress by substituting the fashions of England; instead of furs, she brought in the use of taffety and damask; and cornets and commodes instead of caps of sable. The women now found themselves no longer shut up in separate apartments, but saw company, visited each other, and were present at every entertainment.

But as the laws to this effect were directed to a savage people, it is amusing enough, the manner in which the ordinances ran. Assemblies were quite unknown among them; the czarina was satisfied with introducing them, for she found it impossible to render them polite. An ordinance was therefore published according to their notions of breeding, which, as it is a curiosity, and has never before been printed that we know of, we shall give our readers.

“ I. The person at whose house the assembly is to be kept, shall signify the same by hanging out a bill, or by giving some other public notice, by way of advertisement, to persons of both sexes.

“ II. The assembly shall not be open sooner than

four or five o'clock in the afternoon, nor continue longer than ten at night.

“ III. The master of the house shall not be obliged to meet his guests, or conduct them out, or keep them company; but though he is exempt from all this, he is to find them chairs, candles, liquors, and all other necessities that company may ask for; he is likewise to provide them with cards, dice, and every necessary for gaming.

“ IV. There shall be no fixed hour for coming or going away; it is enough for a person to appear in the assembly.

“ V. Every one shall be free to sit, walk, or game as he pleases; nor shall any one go about to hinder him, or take exceptions at what he does, upon pain of emptying the great eagle (a pint bowl full of brandy): it shall likewise be sufficient, at entering or retiring, to salute the company.

“ VI. Persons of distinction, noblemen, superior officers, merchants, and tradesmen of note, head-workmen, especially carpenters, and persons employed in chancery, are to have liberty to enter the assemblies; as likewise their wives and children.

“ VII. A particular place shall be assigned the footmen, except those of the house, that there may be room enough in the apartments designed for the assembly.

“ VIII. No ladies are to get drunk upon any pretence whatsoever: nor shall gentlemen be drunk before nine.

“ IX. Ladies who play at forfeitures, questions and commands, &c. shall not be riotous; no gentleman shall attempt to force a kiss, and no person

shall offer to strike a woman in the assembly, under pain of future exclusion."

Such are the statutes upon this occasion, which, in their very appearance, carry an air of ridicule and satire. But politeness must enter every country by degrees; and these rules resemble the breeding of a clown, awkward but sincere.

VIII.

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR, SUPPOSED TO BE WRITTEN BY THE ORDINARY OF NEWGATE.

MAN is a most frail being, incapable of directing his steps, unacquainted with what is to happen in this life; and perhaps no man is a more manifest instance of the truth of this maxim, than Mr. The. Cibber, just now gone out of the world. Such a variety of turns of fortune, yet such a persevering uniformity of conduct, appears in all that happened in his short span, that the whole may be looked upon as one regular confusion: every action of his life was matter of wonder and surprise, and his death was an astonishment.

This gentleman was born of creditable parents, who gave him a very good education, and a great deal of good learning, so that he could read and write before he was sixteen. However he early discovered an inclination to follow lewd courses; he refused to take the advice of his parents, and pursued the bent of his inclination: he played at cards on Sundays, called himself a gentleman; fell out

with his mother and laundress ; and even in these early days his father was frequently heard to observe, that young The.— would be hanged.

As he advanced in years, he grew more fond of pleasure ; would eat an ortolan for dinner, though he begged the guinea that bought it ; and was once known to give three pounds for a plate of green pease, which he had collected over-night as charity for a friend in distress : he ran into debt with every body that would trust him, and none could build a sconce better than he : so that at last his creditors swore with one accord that The. — would be hanged.

But as getting into debt, by a man who had no visible means but impudence for subsistence, is a thing that every reader is not acquainted with, I must explain that point a little, and that to his satisfaction.

There are three ways of getting into debt ; first, by pushing a face ; as thus : “ You, Mr. Lutestring, send me home six yards of that paduasoy, dammee ; —but, harkee, don’t think I ever intend to pay you for it, dammee.” At this the mercer laughs heartily ; cuts off the paduasoy, and sends it home ; nor is he, till too late, surprised to find the gentleman had said nothing but truth, and kept his word.

The second method of running into debt is called fineering ; which is getting goods made up in such a fashion, as to be unfit for every other purchaser ; and if the tradesman refuses to give them credit, then threaten to leave them upon his hands.

But the third and best method is called, “ Being

the good customer." The gentleman first buys some trifle, and pays for it in ready money; he comes a few days after with nothing about him but bank-bills, and buys, we will suppose, a six-penny tweezer-case; the bills are too great to be changed, so he promises to return punctually the day after, and pay for what he has bought. In this promise he is punctual, and this is repeated for eight or ten times, till his face is well known, and he has got at last the character of a good customer. By this means he gets credit for something considerable, and then never pays for it.

In all this the young man, who is the unhappy subject of our present reflections, was very expert; and could face, fineer, and bring custom to a shop with any man in England: none of his companions could exceed him in this; and his very companions at last said that The.— would be hanged.

As he grew old he grew never the better; he loved ortolans and green pease as before; he drank gravy-soup when he could get it, and always thought his oysters tasted best when he got them for nothing, or, which was just the same, when he bought them upon tick. thus the old man kept up the vices of the youth, and what he wanted in power, he made up by inclination; so that all the world thought that old The.— would be hanged.

And now, reader, I have brought him to his last scene; a scene where perhaps my duty should have obliged me to assist. You expect, perhaps, his dying words, and the tender farewell he took of his wife and children; you expect an account of his coffin and white gloves, his pious ejaculations, and the papers he left behind him. In this I cannot in-

dulge your curiosity; for, oh! the mysteries of Fate, The.—was drowned!

“Reader,” as Hervey saith, “pause and ponder; and ponder and pause; who knows what thy own end may be!”

IX.

ON NATIONAL CONCORD.

I TAKE the liberty to communicate to the public a few loose thoughts upon a subject, which, though often handled, has not yet, in my opinion, been fully discussed: I mean national concord, or unanimity, which in this kingdom has been generally considered as a bare possibility, that existed nowhere but in speculation. Such an union is perhaps neither to be expected nor wished for in a country, whose liberty depends rather upon the genius of the people, than upon any precautions which they have taken in a constitutional way for the guard and preservation of this inestimable blessing.

There is a very honest gentleman, with whom I have been acquainted these thirty years, during which there has not been one speech uttered against the ministry in parliament, nor struggle at an election for a Burgess to serve in the House of Commons, nor a pamphlet published in opposition to any measure of the administration, nor even a private censure passed in his hearing upon the misconduct of any person concerned in public affairs, but he is immediately alarmed, and loudly exclaims against such factious doings, in order to set the peo-

ple by the ears together at such a delicate juncture. "At any other time (says he) such opposition might not be improper, and I don't question the facts that are alleged; but at this crisis, sir, to inflame the nation!—the man deserves to be punished as a traitor to his country." In a word, according to this gentleman's opinion, the nation has been in a violent crisis at any time these thirty years; and were it possible for him to live another century, he would never find any period, at which a man might with safety impugn the infallibility of a minister.

The case is no more than this: my honest friend has invested his whole fortune in the stocks, on government security, and trembles at every whiff of popular discontent. Were every British subject of the same tame and timid disposition, Magna Charta (to use the coarse phrase of Oliver Cromwell) would be no more regarded by an ambitious prince, than magna f—ta, and the liberties of England expire without a groan. Opposition, when restrained within due bounds, is the salubrious gale that ventilates the opinions of the people, which might otherwise stagnate into the most abject submission. It may be said to purify the atmosphere of politics; to dispel the gross vapours raised by the influence of ministerial artifice and corruption, until the constitution, like a mighty rock, stands full disclosed to the view of every individual, who dwells within the shade of its protection. Even when this gale blows with augmented violence, it generally tends to the advantage of the commonwealth, it awakes the apprehension, and consequently arouses all the faculties of the pilot at the

helm, who redoubles his vigilance and caution, exerts his utmost skill, and becoming acquainted with the nature of the navigation, in a little time learns to suit his canvass to the roughness of the sea, and the trim of the vessel. Without these intervening storms of opposition to exercise his faculties, he would become enervate, negligent, and presumptuous ; and in the wantonness of his power, trusting to some deceitful calm, perhaps hazard a step that would wreck the constitution. Yet there is a measure in all things. A moderate frost will fertilize the glebe with nitrous particles, and destroy the eggs of pernicious insects, that prey upon the fancy of the year : but if this frost increases in severity and duration, it will chill the seeds, and even freeze up the roots of vegetables ; it will check the bloom, nip the buds, and blast all the promise of the spring. The vernal breeze that drives the fogs before it, that brushes the cobwebs from the boughs, that fans the air, and fosters vegetation, if augmented to a tempest, will strip the leaves, overthrow the tree, and desolate the garden. The auspicious gale before which the trim vessel plows the bosom of the sea, while the mariners are kept alert in duty and in spirits, if converted to a hurricane, overwhelms the crew with terror and confusion. The sails are rent, the cordage cracked, the masts give way ; the master eyes the havock with mute despair, and the vessel founders in the storm. Opposition, when confined within its proper channel, sweeps away those beds of soil and banks of sand which corruptive power had gathered ; but when it overflows its banks, and deluges the plain, its course is marked by ruin and devastation.

The opposition necessary in a free state, like that of Great Britain, is not at all incompatible with that national concord, which ought to unite the people on all emergencies, in which the general safety is at stake. It is the jealousy of patriotism, not the rancour of party; the warmth of candour, not the virulence of hate; a transient dispute among friends, not an implacable feud that admits of no reconciliation. The history of all ages teems with the fatal effects of internal discord; and were history and tradition annihilated, common sense would plainly point out the mischiefs that must arise from want of harmony and national union. Every school-boy can have recourse to the fable of the rods, which, when united in a bundle, no strength could bend; but when separated into single twigs, a child could break with ease.

X.

FEMALE WARRIORS.

I HAVE spent the greater part of my life in making observations on men and things, and in projecting schemes for the advantage of my country; and though my labours met with an ungrateful return, I will still persist in my endeavours for its service, like that venerable, unshaken, and neglected patriot, Mr. Jacob Henriquez, who, though of the Hebrew nation, hath exhibited a shining example of Christian fortitude and perseverance*. And

* A man well known at this period (1762), as well as

here my conscience urges me to confess, that the hint upon which the following proposals are built, was taken from an advertisement of the said patriot Henriquez, in which he gave the public to understand, that Heaven had indulged him with "seven blessed daughters." Blessed they are, no doubt, on account of their own and their father's virtues: but more blessed may they be, if the scheme I offer should be adopted by the legislature.

The proportion which the number of females born in these kingdoms bears to the male children, is, I think, supposed to be as thirteen to fourteen: but as women are not so subject as the other sex to accidents and intemperance, in numbering adults we shall find the balance on the female side. If, in calculating the numbers of the people, we take in the multitudes that emigrate to the plantations, whence they never return, those that die at sea and make their exit at Tyburn, together with the consumption of the present war, by sea and land, in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, in the German and Indian oceans, in Old France, New France, North America, the Leeward Islands, Germany, Africa, and Asia, we may fairly state the loss of men during the war at one hundred thousand. If this be the case, there must be a superplus of the other sex amounting to the same number, and this superplus will consist of women able to bear arms; as I take

during many preceding years, for the numerous schemes he was daily offering to various ministers, for the purpose of raising money by loans, paying off the national encumbrances, &c. &c. none of which, however, were ever known to have received the smallest notice.

it for granted, that all those who are fit to bear children are likewise fit to bear arms. Now as we have seen the nation governed by old women, I hope to make it appear that it may be defended by young women; and surely this scheme will not be rejected as unnecessary at such a juncture,* when our armies, in the four quarters of the globe are in want of recruits; when we find ourselves entangled in a new war with Spain, on the eve of a rupture in Italy, and indeed in a fair way of being obliged to make head against all the great potentates of Europe.

But, before I unfold my design, it may be necessary to obviate, from experience as well as argument, the objections which may be made to the delicate frame and tender disposition of the female sex, rendering them incapable of the toils, and insuperably averse to the horrors of war. All the world has heard of the nation of Amazons, who inhabited the banks of the river Thermoodon in Capadocia; who expelled their men by force of arms, defended themselves by their own prowess, managed the reins of government, prosecuted the operations in war, and held the other sex in the utmost contempt. We are informed by Homer that Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons, acted as auxiliary to Priam, and fell valiantly fighting in his cause before the walls of Troy. Quintus Curtius tells us, that Thalestris brought one hundred armed Amazons in a present to Alexander the Great. Diodorus Siculus expressly says, there was a nation of female warriors in Africa, who fought against the

* In the year 1762.

Libyan Hercules. We read in the voyages of Columbus, that one of the Caribbee islands was possessed by a tribe of female warriors, who kept all the neighbouring Indians in awe ; but we need not go further than our own age and country to prove that the spirit and constitution of the fair sex are equal to the dangers and fatigues of war. Every novice who has read the authentic and important History of the Pirates, is well acquainted with the exploits of two heroines, called Mary Read and Anne Bonny. I myself have had the honour to drink with Anne Cassier, alias Mother Wade, who had distinguished herself among the buccaneers of America, and in her old age kept a punch-house in Port-Royal of Jamaica. I have likewise conversed with Moll Davis, who had served as a dragoon in all queen Anne's wars, and was admitted on the pension of Chelsea. The late war with Spain, and even the present, hath produced instances of females enlisting both in the land and sea service, and behaving with remarkable bravery in the disguise of the other sex. And who has not heard of the celebrated Jenny Cameron, and some other enterprising ladies of North Britain, who attended a certain Adventurer in all his expeditions, and headed their respective clans in a military character ? That strength of body is often equal to the courage of mind implanted in the fair sex, will not be denied by those who have seen the water-women of Plymouth ; the female drudges of Ireland, Wales, and Scotland ; the fish-women of Billingsgate ; the weeders, podders, and hoppers, who swarm in the fields ; and the bunters who swagger in the streets of London ; not to mention the indefatigable trulls

who follow the camp, and keep up with the line of march, though loaded with bantlings and other baggage.

There is scarcely a street in this metropolis without one or more viragos, who discipline their husbands, and domineer over the whole neighbourhood. Many months are not elapsed since I was witness to a pitched battle between two athletic females, who fought with equal skill and fury until one of them gave out, after having sustained seven falls on the hard stones. They were both stripped to the under petticoat ; their breasts were carefully swathed with handkerchiefs, and as no vestiges of features were to be seen in either when I came up, I imagined the combatants were of the other sex, until a bystander assured me of the contrary, giving me to understand that the conqueror had lain in about five weeks of twin bastards, begot by her second, who was an Irish chairman. When I see the avenues of the Strand beset every night with troops of fierce Amazons, who, with dreadful imprecations, stop, and beat, and plunder passengers, I cannot help wishing that such martial talents were converted to the benefit of the public ; and that those who are so loaded with temporal fire, and so little afraid of eternal fire, should, instead of ruining the souls and bodies of their fellow-citizens, be put in a way of turning their destructive qualities against the enemies of the nation.

Having thus demonstrated that the fair sex are not deficient in strength and resolution, I would humbly propose, that as there is an excess on their side in quantity to the amount of one hundred thousand, part of that number may be employed in

recruiting the army, as well as in raising thirty new Amazonian regiments, to be commanded by females, and serve in regimentals adapted to their sex. The Amazons of old appeared with the left breast bare, an open jacket and trowsers, that descended no farther than the knee; the right breast was destroyed, that it might not impede them in bending the bow, or darting the javelin; but there is no occasion for this cruel excision in the present discipline, as we have seen instances of women who handle the musquet, without finding any inconvenience from that protuberance.

As the sex love gaiety, they may be clothed in vests of pink satin, and open drawers of the same, with buskins on their feet and legs, their hair tied behind and floating on their shoulders, and their hats adorned with white feathers: they may be armed with light carbines and long bayonets, without the encumbrance of swords or shoulder-belts. I make no doubt but many young ladies of figure and fashion will undertake to raise companies at their own expense, provided they like their colonels; but I must insist upon it, if this scheme should be embraced, that Mr. Henriquez's seven blessed daughters may be provided with commissions, as the project is in some measure owing to the hints of that venerable patriot. I moreover give it as my opinion, that Mrs. Kitty Fisher* shall have the command of a battalion, and the nomination of her own officers, provided she will warrant them all sound, and be content to wear proper badges of distinction.

* A celebrated courtesan of that time.

A female brigade, properly disciplined and accoutred, would not, I am persuaded, be afraid to charge a numerous body of the enemy, over whom they would have a manifest advantage; for if the barbarous Scythians were ashamed to fight with the Amazons who invaded them, surely the French, who pique themselves on their sensibility and devotion to the fair sex, would not act upon the offensive against a band of female warriors, arrayed in all the charms of youth and beauty.

XI.

ON NATIONAL PREJUDICE.

As I am one of that sauntering tribe of mortals who spend the greatest part of their time in taverns, coffee-houses, and other places of public resort, I have thereby an opportunity of observing an infinite variety of characters, which, to a person of a contemplative turn, is a much higher entertainment than a view of all the curiosities of art or nature. In one of these my late rambles, I accidentally fell into the company of half a dozen gentlemen who were engaged in a warm dispute about some political affair; the decision of which, as they were equally divided in their sentiments, they thought proper to refer to me, which naturally drew me in for a share of the conversation.

Amongst a multiplicity of other topics, we took occasion to talk of the different characters of the several nations of Europe; when one of the gentlemen, cocking his hat, and assuming such an air of

importance as if he had possessed all the merit of the English nation in his own person, declared that the Dutch were a parcel of avaricious wretches; the French a set of flattering sycophants; that the Germans were drunken sots, and beastly gluttons; and the Spaniards proud, haughty, and surly tyrants; but that in bravery, generosity, clemency, and in every other virtue, the English excelled all the rest of the world.

This very *learned* and *judicious remark* was received with a general smile of approbation by all the company—all, I mean, but your humble servant; who, endeavouring to keep my gravity as well as I could, and reclining my head upon my arm, continued for some time in a posture of affected thoughtfulness, as if I had been musing on something else, and did not seem to attend to the subject of conversation; hoping by these means to avoid the disagreeable necessity of explaining myself, and thereby depriving the gentleman of his imaginary happiness.

But my pseudo-patriot had no mind to let me escape so easily. Not satisfied that his opinion should pass without contradiction, he was determined to have it ratified by the suffrage of every one in the company; for which purpose, addressing himself to me, with an air of inexpressible confidence, he asked me if I was not of the same way of thinking. As I am never forward in giving my opinion, especially when I have reason to believe that it will not be agreeable; so, when I am obliged to give it, I always hold it for a maxim to speak my real sentiments. I therefore told him, that for my own part I should not have ventured

to talk in such a peremptory strain, unless I had made the tour of Europe, and examined the manners of these several nations with great care and accuracy: that perhaps a more impartial judge would not scruple to affirm, that the Dutch were more frugal and industrious, the French more temperate and polite, the Germans more hardy and patient of labour and fatigue, and the Spaniards more staid and sedate, than the English; who, though undoubtedly brave and generous, were at the same time rash, headstrong, and impetuous; too apt to be elated with prosperity, and to despond in adversity.

I could easily perceive that all the company began to regard me with a jealous eye before I had finished my answer, which I had no sooner done, than the patriotic gentleman observed, with a contemptuous sneer, that he was greatly surprised how some people could have the conscience to live in a country which they did not love, and to enjoy the protection of a government to which in their hearts they were inveterate enemies. Finding that by this modest declaration of my sentiments I had forfeited the good opinion of my companions, and given them occasion to call my political principles in question, and well knowing that it was in vain to argue with men who were so very full of themselves, I threw down my reckoning, and retired to my own lodgings, reflecting on the absurd and ridiculous nature of national prejudice and prepossession.

Among all the famous sayings of antiquity, there is none that does greater honour to the author, or affords greater pleasure to the reader (at least

if he be a person of a generous and benevolent heart), than that of the philosopher, who, being asked what "countryman he was," replied that he was "a citizen of the world." How few are there to be found in modern times who can say the same, or whose conduct is consistent with such a profession! we are now become so much Englishmen, Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, or Germans, that we are no longer citizens of the world; so much the natives of one particular spot, or members of one petty society, that we no longer consider ourselves as the general inhabitants of the globe, or members of that grand society which comprehends the whole human kind.

Did these prejudices prevail only among the meanest and lowest of the people, perhaps they might be excused, as they have few, if any, opportunities of correcting them by reading, travelling, or conversing with foreigners; but the misfortune is, that they infect the minds, and influence the conduct, even of our gentlemen; of those I mean, who have every title to this appellation but an exemption from prejudice, which, however, in my opinion, ought to be regarded as the characteristical mark of a gentleman; for, let a man's birth be ever so high, his station ever so exalted, or his fortune ever so large, yet if he is not free from national and other prejudices, I should make bold to tell him, that he had a low and vulgar mind, and had no just claim to the character of a gentleman. And in fact you will always find, that those are most apt to boast of national merit, who have little or no merit of their own to depend on; than which, to be sure, nothing is more natural: the slender vine twists around

the sturdy oak for no other reason in the world but because it has not strength sufficient to support itself.

Should it be alleged in defence of national prejudice, that it is the natural and necessary growth of love to our country, and that therefore the former cannot be destroyed without hurting the latter, I answer, that this is a gross fallacy and delusion. That it is the growth of love to our country I will allow; but that it is the natural and necessary growth of it, I absolutely deny. Superstition and enthusiasm too are the growth of religion; but who ever took it in his head to affirm that they are the necessary growth of this noble principle? They are, if you will, the bastard sprouts of this heavenly plant, but not its natural and genuine branches, and may safely enough be lopped off, without doing any harm to the parent stock; nay, perhaps, till once they are lopped off, this goodly tree can never flourish in perfect health and vigour.

Is it not very possible that I may love my own country, without hating the natives of other countries? that I may exert the most heroic bravery, the most undaunted resolution, in defending its laws and liberty, without despising all the rest of the world as cowards and poltroons? Most certainly it is; and if it were not.—But what need I suppose what is absolutely impossible? But if it were not, I must own, I should prefer the title of the ancient philosopher, viz. a Citizen of the World, to that of an Englishman, a Frenchman, an European, or to any other appellation whatever.

XII.

ON TASTE.

AMIDST the frivolous pursuits and pernicious dissipations of the present age, a respect for the qualities of the understanding still prevails to such a degree, that almost every individual pretends to have a Taste for the Belles Lettres. The spruce 'prentice sets up for a critic, and the puny beau piques himself upon being a connoisseur. Without assigning causes for this universal presumption, we shall proceed to observe, that if it was attended with no other inconvenience than that of exposing the pretender to the ridicule of those few, who can sift his pretensions, it might be unnecessary to undeceive the public, or to endeavour at the reformation of innocent folly, productive of no evil to the commonwealth. But in reality this folly is productive of manifold evils to the community. If the reputation of taste can be acquired, without the least assistance of literature, by reading modern poems, and seeing modern plays, what person will deny himself the pleasure of such an easy qualification? Hence the youth of both sexes are debauched to diversion, and seduced from much more profitable occupations into idle endeavours after literary fame; and a superficial false taste, founded on ignorance and conceit, takes possession of the public. The acquisition of learning, the study of nature, is neglected as superfluous labour; and the best faculties of the mind remain unexercised, and indeed

unopened, by the power of thought and reflection. False taste will not only diffuse itself through all our amusements, but even influence our moral and political conduct; for what is false taste but want of perception to discern propriety, and distinguish beauty?

It has been often alleged, that taste is a natural talent, as independent of art as strong eyes, or a delicate sense of smelling; and without all doubt the principal ingredient in the composition of taste, is a natural sensibility, without which it cannot exist; but it differs from the senses in this particular, that they are finished by nature; whereas taste cannot be brought to perfection without proper cultivation: for taste pretends to judge not only of nature, but also of art; and that judgment is founded upon observation and comparison.

What Horace has said of genius is still more applicable to taste.

Naturâ fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,
Quæsitum est. Ego nec studium sine divite venâ,
Nec rude quid prosit video ingenium: alterius sic
Altera poscit opem res, et conjurat amicè.

Hor. Art. Poet.

'Tis long disputed, whether poets claim,
From *art* or *nature* their best right to fame;
But *art*, if not enrich'd by nature's vein,
And a rude *genius* of uncultured strain,
Are useless both; but when in friendship join'd,
A mutual succour in each other find.

Francis.

We have seen *genius* shine without the help of *art*;
but *taste* must be cultivated by art, before it will

produce agreeable fruit. This, however, we must still inculcate with Quintilian, that study, precept, and observation will naught avail, without the assistance of nature.

Illud tamen imprimis testandum est, nihil præcepta atque artes valere, nisi adjuvante naturâ.

Yet, even though nature has done her part, by implanting the seeds of taste, great pains must be taken, and great skill exerted, in raising them to a proper pitch of vegetation. The judicious tutor must gradually and tenderly unfold the mental faculties of the youth committed to his charge. He must cherish his delicate perception; store his mind with proper ideas; point out the different channels of observation; teach him to compare objects; to establish the limits of right and wrong, of truth and falsehood; to distinguish beauty from tinsel, and grace from affectation; in a word, to strengthen and improve by culture, experience, and instruction, those natural powers of feeling and sagacity, which constitute the faculty called taste, and enable the professor to enjoy the delights of the belles lettres.

We cannot agree in opinion with those, who imagine that nature has been equally favourable to all men, in conferring upon them a fundamental capacity, which may be improved to all the refinement of taste and criticism. Every day's experience convinces us of the contrary. Of two youths educated under the same preceptor, instructed with the same care, and cultivated with the same assiduity, one shall not only comprehend, but even anticipate the lessons of his master, by dint of natural discern-

ment ; while the other toils in vain to imbibe the least tincture of instruction. Such indeed is the distinction between genius and stupidity, which every man has an opportunity of seeing among his friends and acquaintance. Not that we ought too hastily to decide upon the natural capacities of children, before we have maturely considered the peculiarity of disposition, and the bias by which genius may be strangely warped from the common path of education. A youth, incapable of retaining one rule of grammar, or of acquiring the least knowledge of the classics, may nevertheless make great progress in mathematics ; nay, he may have a strong genius for the mathematics, without being able to comprehend a demonstration of Euclid ; because his mind conceives in a peculiar manner, and is so intent upon contemplating the object in one particular point of view, that it cannot perceive it in any other. We have known an instance of a boy, who while his master complained that he had not capacity to comprehend the properties of a right-angled triangle, had actually, in private, by the power of his genius, formed a mathematical system of his own, discovered a series of curious theorems, and even applied his deductions to practical machines of surprising construction. Besides, in the education of youth, we ought to remember that some capacities are like the *pyra præcocia* ; they soon blow, and soon attain to all that degree of maturity which they are capable of acquiring ; while, on the other hand, there are geniuses of slow growth, that are late in bursting the bud, and long in ripening. Yet the first shall yield a faint blossom, and insipid fruit ; whereas the produce of the other shall be

distinguished and admired for its well-concocted juice and exquisite flavour. We have known a boy of five years of age surprise every body by playing on the violin in such a manner as seemed to promise a prodigy in music. He had all the assistance that art could afford ; by the age of ten his genius was at the *ακμή* ; yet after that period, notwithstanding the most intense application, he never gave the least signs of improvement. At six he was admired as a miracle of music ; at six-and-twenty he was neglected as an ordinary fiddler. The celebrated Dean Swift was a remarkable instance in the other extreme. He was long considered as an incorrigible dunce, and did not obtain his degree at the university but *ex speciali gratiâ* : yet when his powers began to unfold, he signalized himself by a very remarkable superiority of genius. When a youth therefore appears dull of apprehension, and seems to derive no advantage from study and instruction, the tutor must exercise his sagacity in discovering whether the soil be absolutely barren, or sown with seed repugnant to its nature, or of such a quality as requires repeated culture and length of time to set its juices in fermentation. These observations, however, relate to capacity in general, which we ought carefully to distinguish from taste. Capacity implies the power of retaining what is received ; taste is the power of relishing or rejecting whatever is offered for the entertainment of the imagination. A man may have capacity to acquire what is called learning and philosophy ; but he must have also sensibility before he feels those emotions, with which taste receives the impressions of beauty.

Natural taste is apt to be seduced and debauched by vicious precept and bad example. There is a dangerous tinsel in false taste, by which the unwary mind and young imagination are often fascinated. Nothing has been so often explained, and yet so little understood, as simplicity in writing. Simplicity in this acceptation has a larger signification than either the *ἀπλοον* of the Greeks, or the *simplex* of the Latins; for it implies beauty. It is the *ἀπλοον και ηδυν* of Demetrius Phalereus, the *simplex munditiis* of Horace, and expressed by one word, *naïveté*, in the French language. It is in fact no other than beautiful nature, without affectation or extraneous ornament. In statuary, it is the Venus of Medicis; in architecture, the Pantheon. It would be an endless task to enumerate all the instances of this natural simplicity, that occur in poetry and painting among the ancients and moderns. We shall only mention two examples of it, the beauty of which consists in the pathetic.

Anaxagoras, the philosopher and preceptor of Pericles, being told that both his sons were dead, laid his hand upon his heart, and, after a short pause, consoled himself with a reflection couched in three words, *ηδειν θνητους γεγεννηκος*, "I knew they were mortal." The other instance we select from the tragedy of Macbeth. The gallant Macduff, being informed that his wife and children were murdered by order of the tyrant, pulls his hat over his eyes, and his internal agony bursts out into an exclamation of four words, the most expressive perhaps that ever were uttered; "He has no children." This is the energetic language of simple nature, which is

now grown into disrepute. By the present mode of education we are forcibly warped from the bias of nature, and all simplicity in manners is rejected. We are taught to disguise and distort our sentiments, until the faculty of thinking is diverted into an unnatural channel; and we not only relinquish and forget, but also become incapable of our original dispositions. We are totally changed into creatures of art and affectation. Our perception is abused, and even our senses are perverted. Our minds lose their native force and flavour. The imagination, sweated by artificial fire, produces naught but vapid bloom. The genius, instead of growing like a vigorous tree, extending its branches on every side, and bearing delicious fruit, resembles a stunted yew, tortured into some wretched form, projecting no shade, displaying no flower, diffusing no fragrance, yielding no fruit, and affording nothing but a barren conceit for the amusement of the idle spectator.

Thus debauched from nature, how can we relish her genuine productions? As well might a man distinguish objects through a prism, that presents nothing but a variety of colours to the eye; or a maid pining in the green sickness prefer a biscuit to a cinder. It has been often alleged that the passions can never be wholly deposited; and that by appealing to these, a good writer will always be able to force himself into the hearts of his readers; but even the strongest passions are weakened, nay sometimes totally extinguished, by mutual opposition, dissipation, and acquired insensibility. How often at the theatre is the tear of sympathy and the burst of laughter repressed by a ridiculous species of pride,

refusing approbation to the author and actor, and renouncing society with the audience? This seeming insensibility is not owing to any original defect. Nature has stretched the string, though it has long ceased to vibrate. It may have been displaced and distracted by the violence of pride; it may have lost its tone through long disuse; or be so twisted or overstrained, as to produce the most jarring discords.

If so little regard is paid to nature, when she knocks so powerfully at the breast, she must be altogether neglected and despised in her calmer mood of serene tranquillity, when nothing appears to recommend her but simplicity, propriety, and innocence. A person must have delicate feelings that can taste the celebrated repartee in Terence : *Homo sum; nihil humani à me alienum puto*; "I am a man; therefore think I have an interest in every thing that concerns humanity." A clear blue sky, spangled with stars, will prove an insipid object to eyes accustomed to the glare of torches and tapers, gilding and glitter; eyes, that will turn with disgust from the green mantle of the spring, so gorgeously adorned with buds and foliage, flowers and blossoms, to contemplate a gaudy silken robe, striped and intersected with unfriendly tints, that fritter the masses of light and distract the vision, pinked into the most fantastic forms, flounced, and furbelled, and fringed with all the littleness of art unknown to elegance.

Those ears, that are offended by the notes of the thrush, the blackbird, and the nightingale, will be regaled and ravished by the squeaking fiddle touched by a musician, who has no other genius than that

which lies in his fingers; they will even be entertained with the rattling of coaches, and the alarming knock, by which the doors of fashionable people are so loudly distinguished. The sense of smelling, that delights in the scent of excrementitious animal juices, such as musk, civet, and urinous salts, will loathe the fragrance of new-mown hay, the sweet-brier, the honey-suckle, and the rose. The organs, that are gratified with the taste of sickly veal bled into a palsy, crammed fowls, and dropsical brawn, pease without substance, peaches without taste, and pine-apples without flavour, will certainly nauseate the native, genuine, and salutary taste of Welch beef, Banstead mutton, and barn-door fowls, whose juices are concocted by a natural digestion, and whose flesh is consolidated by free air and exercise. In such a total perversion of the senses, the ideas must be misrepresented, the powers of the imagination disordered, and the judgment of consequence unsound. The disease is attended with a false appetite, which the natural food of the mind will not satisfy. It will prefer Ovid to Tibullus, and the rant of Lee to the tenderness of Otway. The soul sinks into a kind of sleepy idiotism; and is diverted by toys and baubles, which can only be pleasing to the most superficial curiosity. It is enlivened by a quick succession of trivial objects, that glisten and dance before the eye; and, like an infant, is kept awake and inspirited by the sound of a rattle. It must not only be dazzled and aroused, but also cheated, hurried, and perplexed by the artifice of deception, business, intricacy, and intrigue; a kind of low juggle, which may be termed the legerdemain of genius.

In this state of depravity the mind cannot enjoy, nor indeed distinguish the charms of natural and moral beauty and decorum. The ingenuous blush of native innocence, the plain language of ancient faith and sincerity, the cheerful resignation to the will of Heaven, the mutual affection of the charities, the voluntary respect paid to superior dignity or station, the virtue of beneficence, extended even to the brute creation, nay, the very crimson glow of health and swelling lines of beauty, are despised, detested, scorned, and ridiculed, as ignorance, rudeness, rusticity, and superstition. Thus we see how moral and natural beauty are connected; and of what importance it is, even to the formation of taste, that the manners should be severely superintended. This is a task which ought to take the lead of science; for we will venture to say, that virtue is the foundation of taste; or rather, that virtue and taste are built upon the same foundation of sensibility, and cannot be disjoined without offering violence to both. But virtue must be informed, and taste instructed, otherwise they will both remain imperfect and ineffectual.

Qui didicit patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis,
Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus, et hospes,
Quod sit Conscripti, quod judicis officium, quæ
Partes in bellum missi ducis; ille profecto
Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuique.

The critic, who with nice discernment knows
What to his country and his friends he owes;
How various nature warms the human breast,
To love the parent, brother, friend, or guest;
What the great functions of our judges are,
Of senators, and generals sent to war;

He can distinguish, with unerring art,
The strokes peculiar to each different part.

Hor.

Thus we see taste is composed of nature improved
by art : of feeling tutored by instruction.

XIII.

CULTIVATION OF TASTE.

HAVING explained what we conceive to be true taste, and in some measure accounted for the prevalence of vitiated taste, we should proceed to point out the most effectual manner in which a natural capacity may be improved into a delicacy of judgment, and an intimate acquaintance with the belles lettres. We shall take it for granted, that proper means have been used to form the manners, and attach the mind to virtue. The heart, cultivated by precept, and warmed by example, improves in sensibility, which is the foundation of taste. By distinguishing the influence and scope of morality, and cherishing the ideas of benevolence, it acquires a habit of sympathy, which tenderly feels responsive, like the vibration of unisons, every touch of moral beauty. Hence it is that a man of a social heart, endeavored by the practice of virtue, is awakened to the most pathetic emotions by every uncommon instance of generosity, compassion, and greatness of soul. Is there any man so dead to sentiment, so lost to humanity, as to read unmoved the generous behaviour of the Romans to the states of Greece,

as it is recounted by Livy, or embellished by Thomson, in his Poem of Liberty? Speaking of Greece in the decline of her power, when her freedom no longer existed, he says ;

As at her Isthmian games, a fading pomp !
Her full assembled youth innumerable swarm'd,
On a tribunal raised Flaminius * sat :
A victor he from the deep phalaxes pierced
Of iron-coated Macedon, and back
The Grecian tyrant to his bounds repell'd.
In the high thoughtless gaiety of game,
While sport alone their unambitious hearts
Possess'd ; the sudden trumpet, sounding hoarse,
Bade silence o'er the bright assembly reign.
Then thus a herald—"to the states of Greece
The Roman people, unconfined, restore
Their countries, cities, liberties, and laws ;
Taxes remit, and garrisons withdraw."
The crowd, astonish'd half, and half inform'd,
Stared dubious round ; some question'd, some exclaim'd,
(Like one who dreaming, between hope and fear,
Is lost in anxious joy) "Be that again
—Be that again proclaim'd distinct and loud!"
Loud and distinct it was again proclaim'd ;
And still as midnight in the rural shade,
When the gale slumbers, they the words devour'd.
Awhile severe amazement held them mute,
Then bursting broad, the boundless shout to heaven
From many a thousand hearts ecstatic sprung !
On every hand rebellow'd to them joy ;
The swelling sea, the rocks, and vocal hills—
—Like Bacchanals they flew,
Each other straining in a strict embrace,
Nor strain'd a slave ; and loud acclaims till night,
Round the proconsul's tent repeated rung.

To one acquainted with the genius of Greece, the

* His real name was Quintus Flaminius.

character and disposition of that polished people, admired for science, renowned for an unextinguishable love of freedom ; nothing can be more affecting than this instance of generous magnanimity of the Roman people, in restoring them unasked to the full fruition of those liberties which they had so unfortunately lost.

The mind of sensibility is equally struck by the generous confidence of Alexander, who drinks without hesitation the potion presented by his physician, Philip, even after he had received intimation that poison was contained in the cup ; a noble and pathetic scene ! which hath acquired new dignity and expression under the inimitable pencil of La Sœur. Humanity is melted into tears of tender admiration by the deportment of Henry IV. of France, while his rebellious subjects compelled him to form the blockade of his capital. In chastising his enemies, he could not but remember they were his people ; and knowing they were reduced to the extremity of famine, he generously connived at the methods practised to supply them with provision. Chancing one day to meet two peasants, who had been detected in these practices, as they were led to execution they implored his clemency, declaring in the sight of Heaven, they had no other way to procure subsistence for their wives and children. He pardoned them on the spot, and giving them all the money that was in his purse, “ Henry of Bearne is poor (said he) ; had he more money to afford, you should have it—go home to your families in peace ; and remember your duty to God, and your allegiance to your sovereign.” Innumerable examples of the same kind may be selected from history, both

ancient and modern, the study of which we would therefore strenuously recommend.

Historical knowledge indeed becomes necessary on many other accounts, which in its place we will explain : but as the formation of the heart is of the first consequence, and should precede the cultivation of the understanding, such striking instances of superior virtue ought to be culled for the perusal of the young pupil, who will read them with eagerness, and revolve them with pleasure. Thus the young mind becomes enamoured of moral beauty, and the passions are listed on the side of humanity. Meanwhile knowledge of a different species will go hand in hand with the advances of morality, and the understanding be gradually extended. Virtue and sentiment reciprocally assist each other, and both conduce to the improvement of perception. While the scholar's chief attention is employed in learning the Latin and Greek languages, and this is generally the task of childhood and early youth, it is even then the business of the preceptor to give his mind a turn for observation, to direct his powers of discernment, to point out the distinguishing marks of character, and dwell upon the charms of moral and intellectual beauty, as they may chance to occur in the classics that are used for his instruction. In reading Cornelius Nepos and Plutarch's Lives, even with a view to grammatical improvement only, he will insensibly imbibe and learn to compare ideas of greater importance. He will become enamoured of virtue and patriotism, and acquire a detestation for vice, cruelty, and corruption. The perusal of the Roman story in the works of Florus, Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus, will irresistibly engage his atten-

tion; expand his conception, cherish his memory, exercise his judgment, and warm him with a noble spirit of emulation. He will contemplate with love and admiration the disinterested candour of Aristides, surnamed the Just, whom the guilty cabals of his rival Themistocles exiled from his ungrateful country by a sentence of ostracism. He will be surprised to learn, that one of his fellow-citizens, an illiterate artisan, bribed by his enemies, chancing to meet him in the street without knowing his person, desired he would write Aristides on his shell, (which was the method those plebeians used to vote against delinquents), when the innocent patriot wrote his own name without complaint or expostulation. He will, with equal astonishment, applaud the inflexible integrity of Fabricius, who preferred the poverty of innocence to all the pomp of affluence, with which Pyrrhus endeavoured to seduce him from the arms of his country. He will approve with transport the noble generosity of his soul in rejecting the proposal of that prince's physician, who offered to take him off by poison; and in sending the caitiff bound to his sovereign, whom he would have so basely and cruelly betrayed.

In reading the ancient authors, even for the purposes of school education, the unformed taste will begin to relish the irresistible energy, greatness, and sublimity of Homer; the serene majesty, the melody, and pathos of Virgil; the tenderness of Sappho and Tibullus; the elegance and propriety of Terence; the grace, vivacity, satire, and sentiment of Horace.

Nothing will more conduce to the improvement of the scholar in his knowledge of the languages, as

well as in taste and morality, than his being obliged to translate choice parts and passages of the most approved classics, both poetry and prose, especially the latter; such as the orations of Demosthenes and Isocrates, the Treatise of Longinus on the Sublime, the Commentaries of Cæsar, the Epistles of Cicero and the Younger Pliny, and the two celebrated speeches in the Catilinarian conspiracy by Sallust. By this practice he will become more intimate with the beauties of the writing and the idioms of the language from which he translates; at the same time it will form his style, and by exercising his talent of expression, make him a more perfect master of his mother tongue. Cicero tells us, that in translating two orations, which the most celebrated orators of Greece pronounced against each other, he performed this task, not as a servile interpreter, but as an orator, preserving the sentiments, forms, and figures of the original, but adapting the expression to the taste and manners of the Romans.—“*In quibus non verbum pro verbo necesse habui reddere, sed genus omnium verborum vimque servavi;*” “in which I did not think it was necessary to translate literally word for word, but I preserved the natural and full scope of the whole.” Of the same opinion was Horace, who says in his Art of Poetry,

*Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere, fidus
Interpres:—*

Nor word for word translate with painful care—

Nevertheless, in taking the liberty here granted, we are apt to run into the other extreme, and substitute equivalent thoughts and phrases, till hardly any

features of the original remain. The metaphors of figures, especially in poetry, ought to be as religiously preserved as the images of painting, which we cannot alter or exchange without destroying, or injuring, at least, the character and style of the original.

In this manner the preceptor will sow the seeds of that taste, which will soon germinate, rise, blossom, and produce perfect fruit by dint of future care and cultivation. In order to restrain the luxuriancy of the young imagination, which is apt to run riot, to enlarge the stock of ideas, exercise the reason, and ripen the judgment, the pupil must be engaged in the severer study of science. He must learn geometry, which Plato recommends for strengthening the mind, and enabling it to think with precision. He must be made acquainted with geography and chronology, and trace philosophy through all her branches. Without geography and chronology he will not be able to acquire a distinct idea of history; nor judge of the propriety of many interesting scenes, and a thousand allusions, that present themselves in the works of genius. Nothing opens the mind so much as the researches of philosophy; they inspire us with sublime conceptions of the Creator, and subject, as it were, all nature to our command. These bestow that liberal turn of thinking, and in a great measure contribute to that universality in learning, by which a man of taste ought to be eminently distinguished. But history is the inexhaustible source from which he will derive his most useful knowledge respecting the progress of the human mind, the constitution of go-

vernment, the rise and decline of empires, the revolution of arts, the variety of character, and the vicissitudes of fortune.

The knowledge of history enables the poet not only to paint characters, but also to describe magnificent and interesting scenes of battle and adventure. Not that the poet or painter ought to be restrained to the letter of historical truth. History represents what has really happened in nature; the other arts exhibit what might have happened, with such exaggeration of circumstance and feature as may be deemed an improvement on nature: but this exaggeration must not be carried beyond the bounds of probability: and these, generally speaking, the knowledge of history will ascertain. It would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to find a man actually existing, whose proportions should answer to those of the Greek statue, distinguished by the name of the Apollo of Belvedere; or to produce a woman similar in proportion of parts to the other celebrated piece, called the Venus de Medicis; therefore it may be truly affirmed, that they are not conformable to the real standard of nature: nevertheless, every artist will own that they are the very archetypes of grace, elegance, and symmetry; and every judging eye must behold them with admiration, as improvements on the lines and lineaments of nature. The truth is, the sculptor or statuary composed the various proportions in nature from a great number of different subjects, every individual of which he found imperfect or defective in some one particular, though beautiful in all the rest; and from these observations, corroborated by

taste and judgment, he formed an ideal pattern, according to which his idea was modelled, and produced in execution.

Every body knows the story of Zeuxis, the famous painter of Heraclea, who, according to Pliny, invented the *chiaro oscuro*, or disposition of light and shade, among the ancients, and excelled all his contemporaries in the chromatique, or art of colouring. This great artist being employed to draw a perfect beauty, in the character of Helen, to be placed in the Temple of Juno, culled out five of the most beautiful damsels the city could produce, and selecting what was excellent in each, combined them in one picture according to the predisposition of his fancy, so that it shone forth an amazing model of perfection.* In like manner, every man of genius, regulated by true taste, entertains in his imagination an ideal beauty, conceived and cultivated as an improvement upon nature : and this we refer to the article of invention.

It is the business of art to imitate nature, but not with a servile pencil ; and to choose those attitudes and dispositions only, which are beautiful and engaging. With this view we must avoid all disagreeable prospects of nature, which excite the ideas of abhorrence and disgust. For example, a painter

* Præbete igitur mihi quæso, inquit, ex istis virginibus formosissimas, dum pingo id, quod pollicitus sum vobis, ut mutum in simulacrum ex animali exemplo veritas transferatur.—Ille autem quinque delegit.—Neque enim putavit omnia, quæ quæreret ad venustatem, uno in corpore se reperire posse; ideo quod nihil simplici in genere omnibus ex partibus perfectum natura expolivit. *Cic. Lib. 2. de Inv. cap. 1.*

would not find his account in exhibiting the resemblance of a dead carcass, half consumed by vermin, or of swine wallowing in ordure, or of a beggar lousing himself on a dunghill, though these scenes should be painted never so naturally, and all the world must allow that the scenes were taken from nature, because the merit of the imitation would be greatly over-balanced by the vile choice of the artist. There are, nevertheless, many scenes of horror, which please in the representation, from a certain interesting greatness, which we shall endeavour to explain when we come to consider the sublime.

Were we to judge every production by the rigorous rules of nature, we should reject the *Iliad* of Homer, the *Æneid* of Virgil, and every celebrated tragedy of antiquity and the present times, because there is no such thing in nature as an Hector or Turnus talking in hexameter, or an Othello in blank verse: we should condemn the Hercules of Sophocles, and the Miser of Moliere, because we never knew a hero so strong as the one, or a wretch so sordid as the other. But if we consider poetry as an elevation of natural dialogue, as a delightful vehicle for conveying the noblest sentiments of heroism and patriot virtue, to regale the sense with the sounds of musical expression, while the fancy is ravished with enchanting images, and the heart warmed to rapture and ecstasy, we must allow that poetry is a perfection to which nature would gladly aspire; and that though it surpasses, it does not deviate from her, provided the characters are marked with propriety and sustained with genius. Characters, therefore, both in poetry and painting, may be a little overcharged or exaggerated, without offer-

ing violence to nature; nay, they must be exaggerated in order to be striking, and to preserve the idea of imitation, whence the reader and spectator derive in many instances their chief delight. If we meet a common acquaintance in the street, we see him without emotion; but should we chance to spy his portrait well executed, we are struck with pleasing admiration. In this case the pleasure arises entirely from the imitation. We every day hear unmoved the natives of Ireland and Scotland speaking their own dialects; but should an Englishman mimic either, we are apt to burst out into a loud laugh of applause, being surprised and tickled by the imitation alone, though at the same time we cannot but allow that the imitation is imperfect. We are more affected by reading Shakspeare's description of Dover Cliff, and Otway's picture of the Old Hag, than we should be were we actually placed on the summit of the one, or met in reality with such a bel-dame as the other, because in reading these descriptions we refer to our own experience, and perceive with surprise the justness of the imitations. But if it is so close as to be mistaken for nature, the pleasure then will cease, because the *μιμησις*, or imitation, no longer appears.

Aristotle says, that all poetry and music is imitation,* whether epic, tragic, or comic, whether vocal or instrumental, from the pipe or the lyre. He observes, that in man there is a propensity to imitate

*'Εποποιῖα δὴ καὶ ἡ τῆς τραγωδίας ποιησις, ἐπὶ δὲ κωμῶδια καὶ ἡ διθυραμβοποιητικὴ, καὶ τῆς αὐλῆλικῆς ἡ πλειστὴ καὶ κιθαριστικὴς, πασαι στογχανοῦσιν οὐσαι μίμησις εἰς τὸ συνολόν.

even from his infancy; that the first perceptions of the mind are acquired by imitation; and seems to think that the pleasure derived from imitation is the gratification of an appetite implanted by nature. We should rather think the pleasure it gives arises from the mind's contemplating that excellency of art, which thus rivals nature, and seems to vie with her in creating such a striking resemblance of her works. Thus the arts may be justly termed imitative even in the article of invention: for in forming a character, contriving an incident, and describing a scene, he must still keep nature in view, and refer every particular of his invention to her standard; otherwise his production will be destitute of truth and probability, without which the beauties of imitation cannot subsist. It will be a monster of incongruity, such as Horace alludes to, in the beginning of his Epistle to the Pisos:

Humano capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere si velit, et varias inducere plumas
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Desinat in piscem, mulier formosa superne;
Spectatum admissi risum teneatis, amici?

Suppose a painter to a human head
Should join a horse's neck, and wildly spread
The various plumage of the feather'd kind
O'er limbs of different beasts absurdly join'd;
Or if he gave to view a beauteous maid
Above the waist with every charm array'd;
Should a foul fish her lower parts unfold,
Would you not laugh such pictures to behold?

The magazine of nature supplies all those images which compose the most beautiful imitations. This

the artist examines occasionally, as he would consult a collection of masterly sketches; and selecting particulars for his purpose, mingles the ideas with a kind of enthusiasm, or *το Δείον*, which is that gift of heaven we call genius, and finally produces such a whole as commands admiration and applause.

XIV.

ORIGIN OF POETRY.

THE study of polite literature is generally supposed to include all the liberal arts of poetry, painting, sculpture, music, eloquence, and architecture. All these are founded on imitation; and all of them mutually assist and illustrate each other. But as painting, sculpture, music, and architecture cannot be perfectly attained without long practice of manual operation, we shall distinguish them from poetry and eloquence, which depend entirely on the faculties of the mind; and on these last, as on the arts which immediately constitute the Belles Lettres, employ our attention in the present inquiry; or, if it should run to a greater length than we propose, it shall be confined to poetry alone; a subject that comprehends, in its full extent, the province of taste, or what is called polite literature; and differs essentially from eloquence both in its end and origin.

Poetry sprang from ease, and was consecrated to pleasure; whereas eloquence arose from necessity, and aims at conviction. When we say poetry sprang from ease, perhaps we ought to except that species of it which owed its rise to inspiration and enthu-

siasm, and properly belonged to the culture of religion. In the first ages of mankind, and even in the original state of nature, the unlettered mind must have been struck with sublime conceptions, with admiration and awe, by those great phenomena, which, though every day repeated, can never be viewed without internal emotion. Those would break forth in exclamations expressive of the passion produced, whether surprise or gratitude, terror or exultation. The rising, the apparent course, the setting, and seeming renovation of the sun; the revolution of light and darkness; the splendour, change, and circuit of the moon; and the canopy of heaven, bespangled with stars, must have produced expressions of wonder and adoration. "O! glorious luminary! great eye of the world! source of that light which guides my steps! of that heat which warms me when chilled with cold! of that influence which cheers the face of nature! whither dost thou retire every evening with the shades? Whence dost thou spring every morning with renovated lustre, and never-fading glory? Art not thou the Ruler, the Creator, the God, of all that I behold? I adore thee as thy child, thy slave, thy suppliant! I crave thy protection, and the continuance of thy goodness! Leave me not to perish with cold, nor to wander solitary in utter darkness! Return, return, after thy wonted absence: drive before thee the gloomy clouds that would obscure the face of nature. The birds begin to warble, and every animal is filled with gladness at thy approach: even the trees, the herbs, and the flowers, seem to rejoice with fresher beauties, and send forth a grateful incense to thy power, whence their origin is derived!" A number of individuals,

inspired with the same ideas, would join in these orisons, which would be accompanied with corresponding gesticulations of the body. They would be improved by practice, and grow regular from repetition. The sounds and gestures would naturally fall into measured cadence. Thus the song and dance will be produced, and a system of worship being formed, the muse would be consecrated to the purposes of religion.

Hence those forms of thanksgivings and litanies of supplication with which the religious rites of all nations, even the most barbarous, are at this day celebrated in every quarter of the known world. Indeed this is a circumstance in which all nations surprisingly agree, how much soever they may differ in every other article of laws, customs, manners, and religion. The ancient Egyptians celebrated the festivals of their god Apis with hymns and dances. The superstition of the Greeks, partly derived from the Egyptians, abounded with poetical ceremonies, such as choruses and hymns, sung and danced at their apotheoses, sacrifices, games, and divinations. The Romans had their *carmen seculare* and Salian priests, who on certain festivals sung and danced through the streets of Rome. The Israelites were famous for this kind of exultation: "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances, and Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord," &c. "And David danced before the Lord with all his might." The psalms composed by this monarch, the songs of Deborah and Isaiah, are further confirmations of what we have advanced.

From the Phœnicians the Greeks borrowed the cursed Orthyan song, when they sacrificed their children to Diana. The poetry of the bards constituted great part of the religious ceremonies among the Gauls and Britons; and the carousals of the Goths were religious institutions, celebrated with songs of triumph. The Mahometan dervise dances to the sound of the flute, and whirls himself round until he grows giddy, and falls into a trance. The Marabous compose hymns in praise of Allah. The Chinese celebrate their grand festivals with processions of idols, songs, and instrumental music. The Tartars, Samoiedes, Laplanders, Negroes, even the Caffres, called Hottentots, solemnize their worship (such as it is) with songs and dancing; so that we may venture to say, poetry is the universal vehicle in which all nations have expressed their most sublime conceptions.

Poetry was, in all appearance, previous to any concerted plan of worship, and to every established system of legislation. When certain individuals, by dint of superior prowess or understanding, had acquired the veneration of their fellow savages, and erected themselves into divinities on the ignorance and superstition of mankind; then mythology took place, and such a swarm of deities arose, as produced a religion replete with the most shocking absurdities. Those, whom their superior talents had deified, were found to be still actuated by the most brutal passions of human nature; and in all probability their votaries were glad to find such examples to countenance their own vicious inclinations. Thus fornication, incest, rape, and even bestiality, were sanctified by the amours of Jupiter, Pan, Mars,

Venus, and Apollo. Theft was patronized by Mercury; drunkenness by Bacchus; and cruelty by Diana. The same heroes and legislators, those who delivered their country, founded cities, established societies, invented useful arts, or contributed in any eminent degree to the security and happiness of their fellow-creatures, were inspired by the same lusts and appetites, which domineered among the inferior classes of mankind; therefore every vice incident to human nature was celebrated in the worship of one or other of these divinities; and every infirmity consecrated by public feast and solemn sacrifice. In these institutions the poet bore a principal share. It was his genius that contrived the plan, that executed the form of worship, and recorded in verse the origin and adventures of their gods and demi-gods. Hence the impurities and horrors of certain rites; the groves of Paphos and Baal Peor; the orgies of Bacchus; the human sacrifices to Moloch and Diana. Hence the theogony of Hesiod; the theology of Homer; and those innumerable maxims scattered through the ancient poets, inviting mankind to gratify their sensual appetites, in imitation of the gods, who were certainly the best judges of happiness. It is well known, that Plato expelled Homer from his commonwealth on account of the infamous characters by which he has distinguished his deities, as well as for some depraved sentiments which he found diffused through the course of the Iliad and Odyssey. Cicero enters into the spirit of Plato, and exclaims, in his first book *De Natura Deorum*, "*Nec multa absurdiora sunt ea, quæ, poetarum vocibus fusa, ipsâ suavitate nocuerunt: qui, et irâ inflammatos, et libidine fu-*

rentes, induxerunt Deos, feceruntque ut eorum bella, pugnas, prælia, vulnere videremus: odia præterea, dissidia, discordias, ortus, interitus, querelas, lamentationes, effusas in omni intemperantiâ libidines, adulteria, vincula, cum humano genere concubitus, mortalesque ex immortali procreatos." "Nor are those things much more absurd, which, flowing from the poet's tongue, have done mischief even by the sweetness of his expression. The poets have introduced gods inflamed with anger and enraged with lust; and even produced before our eyes their wars, their wrangling, their duels, and their wounds. They have exposed, besides, their antipathies, animosities, and dissensions; their origin and death; their complaints and lamentations; their appetites, indulged to all manner of excess; their adulteries; their fetters; their amorous commerce with the human species, and from immortal parents derived a mortal offspring."

As the festivals of the gods necessarily produced good cheer, which was often carried to riot and debauchery, mirth of consequence prevailed; and this was always attended with buffoonery. Taunts and jokes, and raillery and repartee, would necessarily ensue; and individuals would contend for the victory in wit and genius. These contests would in time be reduced to some regulations, for the entertainment of the people thus assembled, and some prize would be decreed to him who was judged to excel his rivals. The candidates for fame and profit being thus stimulated, would task their talents, and naturally recommend these alternate recriminations to the audience, by clothing them with a kind of poetical measure, which should bear a near re-

semblance to prose. Thus, as the solemn service of the day was composed in the most sublime species of poetry, such as the ode or hymn, the subsequent altercation was carried on in iambics, and gave rise to satire. We are told by the Stagirite, that the highest species of poetry was employed in celebrating great actions; but the humbler sort used in this kind of contention;* and that in the ages of antiquity there were some bards that professed heroics, and some that pretended to iambics only.

‘Οἱ μὲν ἥρoικων, οἱ δὲ ἱαμβῶν ποιῆται.

To these rude beginnings we not only owe the birth of satire, but likewise the origin of dramatic poetry. Tragedy herself, which afterwards attained to such dignity as to rival the epic muse, was at first no other than a trial of crambo, or iambics, between two peasants, and a goat was the prize, as Horace calls it, *vile certamen ob hircum*; “a mean contest for a he-goat.” Hence the name τραγωδία, signifying the goat-song, from τραγός *hircus*, and ὠδή *carmen*.

Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,
Mox etiam agrestes satyros nudavit, et asper
Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit, eo quod
Illecebris erat et grata novitate morandus
Spectator, functusque sacris, et potus et exlex.

Hor.

The tragic bard, a goat his humble prize,
Bade satyrs naked and uncouth arise;

* ‘Οἱ μὲν γὰρ σεμνοτεροὶ, τὰς καλὰς ἐμιμοῦντο πράξεις—οἱ δὲ εὐτελεστεροὶ, τὰς τῶν φαυλῶν, πρῶτον λόγους ποιοῦντες.

His muse severe, secure, and undismay'd,
The rustic joke in solemn strain convey'd;
For novelty alone he knew could charm
A lawless crowd, with wine and feasting warm.

Satire then was originally a clownish dialogue in loose iambics, so called, because the actors were disguised like satyrs, who not only recited the praises of Bacchus, or some other deity, but interspersed their hymns with sarcastic jokes and altercation. Of this kind is the *Cyclop* of Euripides, in which Ulysses is the principal actor. The Romans also had their *Atellanæ*, or interludes of the same nature, so called from the city of *Atella*, where they were first acted: but these were highly polished in comparison of the original entertainment, which was altogether rude and innocent. Indeed the *Cyclop* itself, though composed by the accomplished Euripides, abounds with such impurity, as ought not to appear on the stage of any civilized nation.

It is very remarkable that the *Atellanæ*, which were in effect tragi-comedies, grew into such esteem among the Romans, that the performers in these pieces enjoyed several privileges which were refused to the ordinary actors. They were not obliged to unmask, like the other players, when their action was disagreeable to the audience. They were admitted into the army, and enjoyed the privileges of free citizens, without incurring that disgrace, which was affixed to the characters of other actors.* The poet Laberius, who was of equestrian

* Cum artem ludicram, scenamque totam probro duce-
rent, genus id hominum non modo honore civium reli-

order, being pressed by Julius Cæsar to act a part in his own performance, complied with great reluctance, and complained of the dishonour he had incurred, in his prologue preserved by Macrobius, which is one of the most elegant morsels of antiquity.

Tragedy and comedy flowed from the same fountain, though their streams were soon divided. The same entertainment which, under the name of *tragedy*, was rudely exhibited by clowns, for the prize of a goat, near some rural altar of Bacchus, assumed the appellation of *comedy*, when it was transferred into cities, and represented with a little more decorum in a cart or waggon, that strolled from street to street, as the name *κωμωδία* implies, being derived from *κωμη*, a street, and *ωδη*, a poem. To this origin Horace alludes in these lines :

Dicitur et plaustris vexisse poemata Thespis
Quæ canerent agerentque peruncti fœcibus ora.

Thespis, inventor of dramatic art,
Convey'd his vagrant actors in a cart :
High o'er the crowd the mimic tribe appear'd,
And play'd and sung, with lees of wine besmear'd.

Thespis is called the inventor of the dramatic art, because he raised the subject from clownish altercation to the character and exploits of some hero: he improved the language and versification, and relieved the chorus by the dialogue of two

quorum carere, sed etiam tribu moveri notatione censoriâ voluerunt.

Cic. apud S. Aug. de Civit. Dei.

actors. This was the first advance towards that consummation of genius and art, which constitutes what is now called a perfect tragedy. The next great improver was Æschylus, of whom the same critic says,

Post hunc personæ pallæque repertor honestæ
Æschylus, et modicis instravit pulpita tignis;
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.

Then Æschylus a decent vizard used;
Built a low stage; the flowing robe diffused:
In language more sublime two actors rage,
And in the graceful buskin tread the stage.

The dialogue which Thespis introduced, was called the *episode*, because it was an addition to the former subject, namely, the praises of Bacchus; so that now tragedy consisted of two distinct parts, independent of each other; the old *recitative*, which was the *chorus*, sung in honour of the gods; and the *episode*, which turned upon the adventures of some hero. This episode being found very agreeable to the people, Æschylus, who lived about half a century after Thespis, still improved the drama, united the chorus to the episode, so as to make them both parts or members of one fable, multiplied the actors, contrived the stage, and introduced the decorations of the theatre; so that Sophocles, who succeeded Æschylus, had but one step to surmount, in order to bring the drama to perfection. Thus tragedy was gradually detached from its original institution, which was entirely religious. The priests of Bacchus loudly complained of this innovation by means of the episode, which

was foreign to the intention of the chorus; and hence arose the proverb of *Nihil ad Dionysium*, "nothing to the purpose." Plutarch himself mentions the episode as a perversion of tragedy, from the honour of the gods to the passions of men: but, notwithstanding all opposition, the new tragedy succeeded to admiration; because it was found the most pleasing vehicle of conveying moral truths, of meliorating the heart, and extending the interests of humanity.

Comedy, according to Aristotle, is the younger sister of Tragedy. As the first originally turned upon the praises of the gods, the latter dwelt on the follies and vices of mankind. Such, we mean, was the scope of that species of poetry which acquired the name of comedy, in contradiction to the tragic muse: for in the beginning they were the same. The foundation, upon which comedy was built, we have already explained to be the practice of satirical repartee or altercation, in which individuals exposed the follies and frailties of each other, on public occasions of worship and festivity.

The first regular plan of comedy is said to have been the *margites* of Homer, exposing the idleness and folly of a worthless character: but of this performance we have no remains. That division, which is termed the *ancient comedy*, belongs to the labours of Eupolis, Cratinus, and Aristophanes, who were contemporaries, and flourished at Athens about four hundred and thirty years before the Christian era. Such was the licence of the muse at this period, that, far from lashing vice in general characters, she boldly exhibited the exact portrait of every individual, who had rendered

himself remarkable or notorious by his crimes, folly, or debauchery. She assumed every circumstance of his external appearance, his very attire, air, manner, and even his name : according to the observation of Horace.

Poetæ

quorum cômœdia prisca virorum est :
 Si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus, aut fur,
 Quod mœchus foret, aut sicarius, aut alioqui
 Famosus, multâ cum libertate notabant.

The comic poets, in its earliest age,
 Who form'd the manners of the Grecian stage—
 Was there a villain who might justly claim
 A better right of being damn'd to fame,
 Rake, cut-throat, thief, whatever was his crime,
 They boldly stigmatised the wretch in rhyme.

Eupolis is said to have satirized Alcibiades in this manner, and to have fallen a sacrifice to the resentment of that powerful Athenian : but others say he was drowned in the Hellespont, during a war against the Lacedemonians ; and that, in consequence of this accident, the Athenians passed a decree, that no poet should ever bear arms.

The comedies of Cratinus are recommended by Quintilian for their eloquence ; and Plutarch tells us, that even Pericles himself could not escape the censure of this poet.

Aristophanes, of whom there are eleven comedies still extant, enjoyed such a pre-eminence of reputation, that the Athenians by a public decree honoured him with a crown made of a consecrated olive-tree, which grew in the citadel, for his care and success in detecting and exposing the vices

of those who governed the commonwealth. Yet this poet, whether impelled by mere wantonness of genius, or actuated by malice and envy, could not refrain from employing the shafts of his ridicule against Socrates, the most venerable character of Pagan antiquity. In the comedy of the Clouds, this virtuous philosopher was exhibited on the stage under his own name, in a cloak exactly resembling that which Socrates wore, in a mask modelled from his features, disputing publicly on the nature of right and wrong. This was undoubtedly an instance of the most flagrant licentiousness; and what renders it the more extraordinary, the audience received it with great applause, even while Socrates himself sat publicly in the theatre. The truth is, the Athenians were so fond of ridicule, that they relished it even when employed against the gods themselves, some of whose characters were very roughly handled by Aristophanes and his rivals in reputation.

We might here draw a parallel between the inhabitants of Athens and the natives of England, in point of constitution, genius, and disposition. Athens was a free state like England, that piqued itself upon the influence of the democracy. Like England, its wealth and strength depended upon its maritime power, and it generally acted as umpire in the disputes that arose among its neighbours. The people of Athens, like those of England, were remarkably ingenious, and made great progress in the arts and sciences. They excelled in poetry, history, philosophy, mechanics, and manufactures; they were acute, discerning, disputatious, fickle,

wavering, rash, and combustible, and, above all other nations in Europe, addicted to ridicule; a character which the English inherit in a very remarkable degree.

If we may judge from the writings of Aristophanes, his chief aim was to gratify the spleen and excite the mirth of his audience; of an audience too, that would seem to have been uninformed by taste, and altogether ignorant of decorum; for his pieces are replete with the most extravagant absurdities, virulent slander, impiety, impurities, and low buffoonery. The comic muse, not contented with being allowed to make free with the gods and philosophers, applied her scourge so severely to the magistrates of the commonwealth, that it was thought proper to restrain her within bounds by a law, enacting that no person should be stigmatised under his real name; and thus the chorus was silenced. In order to elude the penalty of this law, and gratify the taste of the people, the poets began to substitute fictitious names, under which they exhibited particular characters in such lively colours, that the resemblance could not possibly be mistaken or overlooked. This practice gave rise to what is called the *middle comedy*, which was but of short duration: for the legislature, perceiving that the first law had not removed the grievance against which it was provided, issued a second ordinance, forbidding, under severe penalties, any real or family occurrences to be represented. This restriction was the immediate cause of improving comedy into a general mirror, held forth to reflect the various follies and foibles incident to human nature;

a species of writing called the *new comedy*, introduced by Diphilus and Menander, of whose works nothing but a few fragments remain.

XV.

POETRY DISTINGUISHED FROM OTHER WRITING.

HAVING communicated our sentiments touching the origin of poetry, by tracing tragedy and comedy to their common source, we shall now endeavour to point out the criteria, by which poetry is distinguished from every other species of writing. In common with other arts, such as statuary and painting, it comprehends imitation, invention, composition, and enthusiasm. Imitation is indeed the basis of all the liberal arts: invention and enthusiasm constitute genius, in whatever manner it may be displayed. Eloquence of all sorts admits of enthusiasm. Tully says, an orator should be "*vehemens ut procella, excitatus ut torrens, incensus ut fulmen; tonat, fulgurat, et rapidis eloquentiæ fluctibus cuncta proruit et proturbat.*" "Violent as a tempest, impetuous as a torrent, and glowing intense like the red bolt of heaven, he thunders, lightens, overthrows, and bears down all before him, by the irresistible tide of eloquence." This is the "*mens diviniore atque os magna sonaturum*" of Horace. This is the talent,

—— Meum qui pectus inaniter angit,
Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet,
Ut magus.

With passions not my own who fires my heart;
Who with unreal terrors fills my breast,
As with a magic influence possess'd.

We are told, that Michael Angelo Buonaroti used to work at his statues in a fit of enthusiasm, during which he made the fragments of the stone fly about him with surprising violence. The celebrated Lully being one day blamed for setting nothing to music but the languid verses of Quinault, was animated with the reproach, and running in a fit of enthusiasm to his harpsichord, sung in recitative, and accompanied four pathetic lines from the *Iphigenia* of Racine with such expression, as filled the hearers with astonishment and horror.

Though versification be one of the criteria that distinguish poetry from prose, yet it is not the sole mark of distinction. Were the histories of Polybius and Livy simply turned into verse, they would not become poems; because they would be destitute of those figures, embellishments, and flights of imagination, which display the poet's art and invention. On the other hand, we have many productions that justly lay claim to the title of poetry, without having the advantage of versification; witness the Psalms of David, the Song of Solomon, with many beautiful hymns, descriptions, and rhapsodies, to be found in different parts of the Old Testament; some of them the immediate productions of divine inspiration: witness the Celtic fragments, which have lately appeared in the English language, and are certainly replete with poetical merit. But though good versification alone will not constitute poetry, bad versification alone will certainly degrade and render disgusting the sublimest sentiments and finest flowers of imagination. This humiliating power of bad verse appears in many translations of the ancient poets; in Ogilby's Homer,

Trapp's Virgil, and frequently in Creech's Horace. This last indeed is not wholly devoid of spirit, but it seldom rises above mediocrity; and as Horace says,

— Mediocribus esse poetis
Non homines, non Dî, non concessere columnæ.

But God and man and letter'd post denies
That poets ever are of middling size.

How is that beautiful ode, beginning with “*Justum et tenacem propositi virum*,” chilled and tamed by the following translation :

He who by principle is sway'd,
In truth and justice still the same,
Is neither of the crowd afraid,
Though civil broils the state inflame;
Nor to a haughty tyrant's frown will stoop,
Nor to a raging storm, when all the winds are up.

Should nature with convulsions shake,
Struck with the fiery bolts of Jove,
The final doom and dreadful crack
Cannot his constant courage move.

That long Alexandrine—“*Nor to a raging storm, when all the winds are up*,” is drawling, feeble, swoln with a pleonasm or tautology, as well as deficient in the rhyme; and as for “*the dreadful crack*” in the next stanza, instead of exciting terror, it conveys a low and ludicrous idea. How much more elegant and energetic is this paraphrase of the same ode, inserted in one of the volumes of Hume's History of England :

The man whose mind, on virtue bent,
Pursues some greatly good intent
With undiverted aim,

Serene beholds the angry crowd;
 Nor can their clamours fierce and loud
 His stubborn honour tame.

Nor the proud tyrant's fiercest threat,
 Nor storms that from their dark retreat
 The lawless surges wake;
 Nor Jove's dread bolt that shakes the pole
 The firmer purpose of his soul
 With all its power can shake.

Should Nature's frame in ruins fall,
 And Chaos o'er the sinking ball
 Resume primeval sway,
 His courage Chance and Fate defies,
 Nor feels the wreck of earth and skies
 Obstruct its destined way.

If poetry exists independent of versification, it will naturally be asked, how then is it to be distinguished? Undoubtedly by its own peculiar expression: it has a language of its own, which speaks so feelingly to the heart, and so pleasingly to the imagination, that its meaning cannot possibly be misunderstood by any person of delicate sensations. It is a species of painting with words, in which the figures are happily conceived, ingeniously arranged, affectingly expressed, and recommended with all the warmth and harmony of colouring: it consists of imagery, description, metaphors, similes, and sentiments, adapted with propriety to the subject, so contrived and executed as to soothe the ear, surprise and delight the fancy, mend and melt the heart, elevate the mind, and please the understanding. According to Flaccus:

Aut prodesse volunt, aut delectare poëtæ;
 Aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitæ.

Poets would profit or delight mankind,
And with the amusing show the instructive join'd.

Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci,
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.

Profit and pleasure mingled thus with art
To soothe the fancy and improve the heart.

Tropes and figures are likewise liberally used in rhetoric: and some of the most celebrated orators have owned themselves much indebted to the poets. Theophrastus expressly recommends the poet for this purpose. From their source the spirit and energy, the pathetic, the sublime, and the beautiful, are derived.* But these figures must be more sparingly used in rhetoric than in poetry, and even then mingled with argumentation, and a detail of facts altogether different from poetical narration. The poet, instead of simply relating the incident, strikes off a glowing picture of the scene, and exhibits it in the most lively colours to the eye of the imagination. "It is reported that Homer was blind," says Tully in his *Tusculan Questions*, "yet his poetry is no other than painting. What country, what climate, what ideas, battles, commotions, and contests of men, as well as of wild beasts, has he not painted in such a manner as to bring before our eyes those very scenes, which he himself could not behold!"† We cannot, therefore subscribe to

* Namque ab his (scilicet poetis) et in rebus spiritus, et in verbis sublimitas, et in affectibus motus omnis, et in personis decor petitur. *Quintilian*, l. x.

† Quæ regio, quæ ora, quæ species formæ, quæ pugna, qui malus hominum, qui ferarum, non ita expictus est, ut quæ ipse non viderit, nos ut videremus, effecerit!

the opinion of some ingenious critics, who have blamed Mr. Pope for deviating in some instances from the simplicity of Homer, in his translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. For example, the Grecian bard says simply, the sun rose; and his translator gives us a beautiful picture of the sun rising. Homer mentions a person who played upon the lyre; the translator sets him before us warbling to the silver strings. If this be a deviation, it is at the same time an improvement. Homer himself, as Cicero observes above, is full of this kind of painting, and particularly fond of description even in situations where the action seems to require haste. Neptune, observing from Samothrace the discomfiture of the Grecians before Troy, flies to their assistance, and might have been wafted thither in half a line; but the bard describes him, first, descending the mountain on which he sat; secondly, striding towards his palace at *Ægæ*, and yoking his horses; thirdly, he describes him putting on his armour; and lastly, ascending his car, and driving along the surface of the sea. Far from being disgusted by these delays, we are delighted with the particulars of the description. Nothing can be more sublime than the circumstance of the mountain's trembling beneath the footsteps of an immortal:

——Τρεμε δ' οὐρεα μακρὰ καὶ ὕλη
Πρὸσσιν ὑπ' ἀθανάτοισι Ποσειδάωνος ἱόντος.

But his passage to the Grecian fleet is altogether transporting.

Βῆδ' ἔλααν ἐπὶ κυματ', &c.

He mounts the car, the golden scourge applies,
 He sits superior, and the chariot flies;
 His whirling wheels the glassy surface sweep:
 The enormous monsters, rolling o'er the deep,
 Gambol around him on the watery way,
 And heavy whales in awkward measures play;
 The sea subsiding spreads a level plain,
 Exults and crowns the monarch of the main;
 The parting waves before his coursers fly;
 The wandering waters leave his axle dry.

With great veneration for the memory of Mr. Pope, we cannot help objecting to some lines of this translation. We have no idea of the sea's exulting and crowning Neptune, after it had subsided into a level plain. There is no such image in the original. Homer says, the whales exulted, and knew or owned their king; and that the sea parted with joy; γηθοσυνη δε θαλασσα διστατο. Neither is there a word of the wandering waters; we therefore think the lines might be thus altered to advantage:

They knew and own'd the monarch of the main;
 The sea subsiding spreads a level plain;
 The curling waves before his coursers fly:
 The parting surface leaves his brazen axle dry.

Besides the metaphors, similes, and allusions of poetry, there is an infinite variety of tropes or turns of expression, occasionally disseminated through works of genius, which serve to animate the whole, and distinguish the glowing effusions of real inspiration from the cold efforts of mere science. These tropes consist of a certain happy choice and arrangement of words, by which ideas are artfully disclosed in a great variety of attitudes; of epi-

thets, and compound epithets; of sounds collected in order to echo the sense conveyed; of apostrophes; and above all, the enchanting use of the prosopopœia, which is a kind of magic, by which the poet gives life and motion to every inanimate part of nature. Homer, describing the wrath of Agamemnon, in the first book of the Iliad, strikes off a glowing image in two words:

—οσσε δ' οἱ πυρι λαμπετούτι εικτην.

—And from his eye-balls *flash'd the living fire*.

This indeed is a figure, which has been copied by Virgil, and almost all the poets of every age—*oculis micat acribus ignis*—*ignescunt iræ: duris dolor ossibus ardet*. Milton, describing Satan in hell, says,

With head uplift above the wave, and eye
That *sparkling blazed*!—

—He spake: and to confirm his words outflow
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubims. The sudden *blaze* .
Far round *illuminated* hell—

There are certain words in every language particularly adapted to the poetical expression; some from the image or idea they convey to the imagination, and some from the effect they have upon the ear. The first are truly *figurative*; the others may be called *emphatical*.—Rollin observes, that Virgil has upon many occasions poetized (if we may be allowed the expression) a whole sentence by means of the same word, which is *pendere*.

Ite meæ, felix quondam pecus, ite capellæ.
Non ego vos posthac, viridi projectus in antro,
Dumosa pendere procul de rupe videbo.

At ease reclined beneath the verdant shade,
 No more shall I behold my happy flock
 Aloft *hang* browsing on the tufted rock.

Here the word *pendere* wonderfully improves the landscape, and renders the whole passage beautifully picturesque. The same figurative verb we meet with in many different parts of the *Æneid*.

Hi summo in fluctu *pendent*, his unda *dehiscens*
 Terram inter fluctus aperit.

These on the mountain billow *hung*; to those
 The *yawning waves* the yellow sand disclose.

In this instance, the words *pendent* and *dehiscens*, *hung* and *yawning*, are equally poetical. Addison seems to have had this passage in his eye, when he wrote his hymn, which is inserted in the *Spectator*.

—For though in dreadful worlds we *hung*,
 High on the broken wave.

And in another piece of a like nature, in the same collection :

Thy Providence my life sustain'd,
 And all my wants redress'd,
 When in the silent womb I lay,
 And *hung* upon the breast.

Shakspeare, in his admired description of Dover cliff, uses the same expression :

———— half way down
Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade !

Nothing can be more beautiful than the following picture, in which Milton has introduced the same expressive tint :

————— he, on his side
 Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamour'd——

We shall give one example more from Virgil, to show in what a variety of scenes it may appear with propriety and effect. In describing the progress of Dido's passion for Æneas, the poet says,

*Iliacos iterum demens audire labores
 Exposcit, pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore.*

The woes of Troy once more she begg'd to hear ;
 Once more the mournful tale employ'd his tongue,
 While in fond rapture on his lips she *hung*.

The reader will perceive in all these instances that no other word could be substituted with equal energy ; indeed no other word could be used without degrading the sense, and defacing the image.

There are many other verbs of poetical import fetched from nature, and from art, which the poet uses to advantage both in a literal and metaphorical sense ; and these have been always translated for the same purpose from one language to another ; such as *quasso, concutio, cio, suscito, lenio, sævio, mano, fluo, ardeo, mico, aro*, to shake, to wake, to rouse, to soothe, to rage, to flow, to shine or blaze, to plough.—*Quassantia tectum limina Æneas, casu concussus acerbo—Ære ciere viros, Martemque accendere cantu—Æneas acuit Martem et se suscitaturâ—Impium lenite clamorem. Lenibant curas—Ne*

sævi magna sacerdos—Sudor ad imos manabat solos—Suspensæque diu lacrymæ fluxêre per ora—Juvenali ardebat amore—Micat æreus ensis—Nullum maris æquor arandum. It will be unnecessary to insert examples of the same nature from the English poets.

The words we term *emphatical*, are such as by their sound express the sense they are intended to convey; and with these the Greek abounds, above all other languages, not only from its natural copiousness, flexibility, and significance, but also from the variety of its dialects, which enables a writer to vary his terminations occasionally as the nature of the subject requires, without offending the most delicate ear, or incurring the imputation of adopting vulgar provincial expressions. Every smatterer in Greek can repeat

Βῆ δ' ἀκρων παρὰ θίνα πολυφλοισβοῖο θαλάσσης.

in which the two last words wonderfully echo to the sense, conveying the idea of the sea dashing on the shore. How much more significant in sound than that beautiful image of Shakspeare—

“ The sea that on the unnumber'd pebbles beats.”

And yet, if we consider the strictness of propriety, this last expression would seem to have been selected on purpose to concur with the other circumstances which are brought together to ascertain the vast height of Dover cliff: for the poet adds, “ cannot be heard so high.” The place where Gloster stood was so high above the surface of the sea, that the φλοισβος, or *dashing*, could not be heard; and

therefore an enthusiastic admirer of Shakspeare might with some plausibility affirm, the poet had chosen an expression in which that sound is not at all conveyed.

In the very same page of Homer's *Iliad*, we meet with two other striking instances of the same sort of beauty. Apollo, incensed at the insults his priest had sustained, descends from the top of Olympus, with his bow and quiver rattling on his shoulder as he moved along :

Εκλαγξαν δ' ἀρ' οἱ στήθεσσι ἐπ' ὤμων.

Here the sound of the word *Εκλαγξαν* admirably expresses the clanking of armour; as the third line after this surprisingly imitates the twanging of a bow.

Δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γέννεται ἀργυρεοῖο βίοιο.

In shrill-toned murmurs sung the twanging bow.

Many beauties of the same kind are scattered through Homer, Pindar, and Theocritus, such as the *βομβεῦσα μελισσα*, *susurrans apicula*; the *ἀδὺ ψιθυρισμα*, *dulcem susurrum*; and the *μελίσσεται* for the sighing of the pine.

The Latin language teems with sounds adapted to every situation, and the English is not destitute of this significant energy. We have the *cooing* turtle, the *sighing* reed, the *warbling* rivulet, the *sliding* stream, the *whispering* breeze, the *glance*, the *gleam*, the *flash*, the *bickering* flame, the *dashing* wave, the *gushing* spring, the *howling* blast, the *rattling* storm, the *pattering* shower, the *crimp* earth, the *mouldering* tower, the *twanging* bow-string, the *clanging*

arms, the *clanking* chains, the *twinkling* stars, the *tinkling* chords, the *trickling* drops, the *twittering* swallow, the *cawing* rook, the *screeching* owl; and a thousand other words and epithets wonderfully suited to the sense they imply.

Among the select passages of poetry which we shall insert by way of illustration, the reader will find instances of all the different tropes and figures, which the best authors have adopted in the variety of their poetical works, as well as of the apostrophe, abrupt transition, repetition, and prosopopœia.

In the mean time it will be necessary still further to analyse those principles, which constitute the essence of poetical merit; to display those delightful parterres, that teem with the fairest flowers of imagination, and distinguish between the gaudy offspring of a cold insipid fancy, and the glowing progeny, diffusing sweets, produced and invigorated by the sun of genius.

XVI.

ON METAPHOR.

OF all the implements of poetry the metaphor is the most generally and successfully used, and indeed may be termed the muse's caduceus, by the power of which she enchants all nature. The metaphor is a shorter simile, or rather a kind of magical coat, by which the same idea assumes a thousand different appearances. Thus the word *plough*, which originally belongs to agriculture, being metaphorically used, represents the motion of a ship at sea, and the effects of old age upon the human countenance —

—Plough'd the bosom of the deep—
And Time had plough'd his venerable front.

Almost every verb, noun substantive, or term of art in any language, may be in this manner applied to a variety of subjects with admirable effect; but the danger is in sowing metaphors too thick, so as to distract the imagination of the reader, and incur the imputation of deserting nature, in order to hunt after conceits. Every day produces poems of all kinds so inflated with metaphor, that they may be compared to the gaudy bubbles blown up from a solution of soap. Longinus is of opinion, that a multitude of metaphors is never excusable, except in those cases when the passions are roused, and like a winter torrent, rush down impetuous, sweeping them with collective force along. He brings an instance of the following quotation from Demosthenes. “Men (says he) profligates, miscreants, and flatterers, who, having severally preyed upon the bowels of their country, at length betrayed her liberty, first to Philip, and now again to Alexander: who, placing the chief felicity of life in the indulgence of infamous lusts and appetites, overturned in the dust that freedom and independence, which was the chief aim and end of all our worthy ancestors—.” *

* Ανθρωποι, Φησι, μιαιοι, και αλαστορες, και κολακες, ηκρωτηριασμενοι τας εαυτων εκαστοι πατριδας, την ελευθεριαν προπεπωκοτες, προτερον Φιλιππου, νυν δ' Αλεξανδρου, τη γαστρι μετρουντες και τοις αισχιστοις την ευδαιμονιαν, την δ' ελευθεριαν, και το μηδενα εχειν δεσποτην αυτων, α τοις προτεροις Ελλησιν οροι των αγαθων ησαν και κανονες, &c. &c.

Aristotle and Theophrastus seem to think it is rather too bold and hazardous to use metaphors so freely, without interposing some mitigating phrase; such as, "if I may be allowed the expression," or some equivalent excuse. At the same time, Longinus finds fault with Plato for hazarding some metaphors, which indeed appear to be equally affected and extravagant, when he says, "the government of a state should not resemble a bowl of hot fermenting wine, but a cool and moderate beverage, *chastised by the sober deity*"—a metaphor that signifies nothing more than "mixed or lowered with water." Demetrius Phalereus justly observes, that though a judicious use of metaphors wonderfully raises, sublimes, and adorns oratory or elocution, yet they should seem to flow naturally from the subject; and too great a redundancy of them inflates the discourse to a mere rhapsody. The same observation will hold in poetry; and the more liberal or sparing use of them will depend in a great measure on the nature of the subject.

Passion itself is very figurative, and often bursts out into metaphors; but in touching the pathos, the poet must be perfectly well acquainted with the emotions of the human soul, and carefully distinguish between those metaphors which rise glowing from the heart, and those cold conceits, which are engendered in the fancy. Should one of these last unfortunately intervene, it will be apt to destroy the whole effect of the most pathetical incident or situation. Indeed it requires the most delicate taste, and a consummate knowledge of propriety, to employ metaphors in such a manner, as to avoid what the ancients called the *το ψυχρον* the *frigid*, or false

sublime. Instances of this kind were frequent even among the correct ancients. Sappho herself is blamed for using the hyperbole λευκοτεροι χιονος, *whiter than snow*. Demetrius is so nice as to be disgusted at the simile of *swift as the wind*; though, in speaking of a race-horse, we know from experience that this is not even an hyperbole. He would have had more reason to censure that kind of metaphor, which Aristotle styles κατ' ενεργειαν, exhibiting things inanimate as endued with sense and reason; such as that of the sharp-pointed arrow *eager* to take wing among the crowd. “Ο ξυβελης καθ' ομιλον ἐπιπτεσθαι μενεαινων.” Not but that in descriptive poetry this figure is often allowed and admired. The *cruel* sword, the *ruthless* dagger, the *ruffian* blast, are epithets which frequently occur. The *faithful* bosom of the earth, the *joyous* boughs, the trees that *admire their images* reflected in the stream, and many other examples of this kind, are found disseminated through the works of our best modern poets; yet still they must be sheltered under the privilege of the *poetica licentia*; and, except in poetry, they would give offence.

More chaste metaphors are freely used in all kinds of writing; more sparingly in history, and more abundantly in rhetoric: we have seen that Plato indulges in them even to excess. The orations of Demosthenes are animated, and even inflamed with metaphors, some of them so bold as even to entail upon him the censure of the critics. Τοτε τῷ Πυθωνι τῷ ῥητορι ῥεοντι καθ' ὕμων.—“then I did not yield to Python the orator, when he *overflowed* you with a tide of eloquence.” Cicero is still more liberal in the use of them; he ransacks all nature, and pours

forth a redundancy of figures, even with a lavish hand. Even the chaste Xenophon, who generally illustrates his subject by way of simile, sometimes ventures to produce an expressive metaphor, such as part of the phalanx *fluctuated* in the march : and indeed nothing can be more significant than this word *ἐξεκυμνε*, to represent a body of men staggered, and on the point of giving way. Armstrong has used the word *fluctuate* with admirable efficacy, in his philosophical poem intituled *the Art of Preserving Health*.

O ! when the growling winds contend, and all
The sounding forest *fluctuates* in the storm,
To sink in warm repose, and hear the din
Howl o'er the steady battlements——

The word *fluctuate* on this occasion not only exhibits an idea of struggling, but also echoes to the sense like the *ἐφριξεν δε μαχη* of Homer ; which, by the bye, it is impossible to render into English : for the verb *φρισσω* signifies not only to stand erect like prickles, as a grove of lances, but also to make a noise like the crashing of armour, the hissing of javelins, and the splinters of spears.

Over and above an excess of figures, a young author is apt to run into a confusion of mixed metaphors, which leave the sense disjointed, and distract the imagination : Shakspeare himself is often guilty of these irregularities. The soliloquy in Hamlet, which we have so often heard extolled in terms of admiration, is, in our opinion, a heap of absurdities, whether we consider the situation, the sentiment, the argumentation, or the poetry. Hamlet is informed by the ghost, that his father was murdered,

and therefore he is tempted to murder himself, even after he had promised to take vengeance on the usurper, and expressed the utmost eagerness to achieve this enterprize. It does not appear that he had the least reason to wish for death; but every motive, which may be supposed to influence the mind of a young prince, concurred to render life desirable—revenge towards the usurper; love for the fair Ophelia; and the ambition of reigning. Besides, when he had an opportunity of dying without being accessary to his own death; when he had nothing to do but, in obedience to his uncle's command, to allow himself to be conveyed quietly to England, where he was sure of suffering death; instead of amusing himself with meditations on mortality, he very wisely consulted the means of self-preservation, turned the tables upon his attendants, and returned to Denmark. But granting him to have been reduced to the lowest state of despondence, surrounded with nothing but horror and despair, sick of this life, and eager to tempt futurity, we shall see how far he argues like a philosopher.

In order to support this general charge against an author so universally held in veneration, whose very errors have helped to sanctify his character among the multitude, we will descend to particulars, and analyse this famous soliloquy.

Hamlet, having assumed the disguise of madness, as a cloak, under which he might the more effectually revenge his father's death upon the murderer and usurper, appears alone upon the stage in a pensive and melancholy attitude, and communes with himself in these words:

To be, or not to be? That is the question.
 Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
 The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
 Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
 And by opposing, end them?—To die—to sleep—
 No more; and by a sleep, to say, we end
 The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
 That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
 Devoutly to be wish'd.—To die—to sleep—
 To sleep! perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub—
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
 Must give us pause.—There's the respect
 That makes calamity of so long life;
 For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
 The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
 The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
 When he himself might his *quietus* make
 With a bare bodkin? who would fardles bear,
 To groan and sweat under a weary life,
 But that the dread of something after death
 (That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
 No traveller returns) puzzles the will;
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of.
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
 And enterprizes of great pith and moment,
 With this regard their currents turn away,
 And lose the name of action.

We have already observed that there is not any
 apparent circumstance in the fate or situation of
 Hamlet, that should prompt him to harbour one
 thought of self-murder; and therefore these expres-
 sions of despair imply an impropriety in point of
 character. But supposing his condition was truly

desperate, and he saw no possibility of repose but in the uncertain harbour of death, let us see in what manner he argues on that subject. The question is, "To be, or not to be?" to die by my own hand, or live and suffer the miseries of life. He proceeds to explain the alternative in these terms, "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer, or endure the frowns of fortune, or to take arms, and by opposing, end them." Here he deviates from his first proposition, and death is no longer the question. The only doubt is, whether he will stoop to misfortune, or exert his faculties in order to surmount it. This surely is the obvious meaning, and indeed the only meaning that can be implied in these words,

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing, end them.

He now drops this idea, and reverts to his reasoning on death, in the course of which he owns himself deterred from suicide by the thoughts of what may follow death;

—the dread of something after death
(That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
No traveller returns.)

This might be a good argument in a Heathen or Pagan, and such indeed Hamlet really was; but Shakspeare has already represented him as a good Catholic, who must have been acquainted with the truths of revealed religion, and says expressly in this very play,

— Had not the Everlasting fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-murder.

Moreover, he had just been conversing with his father's spirit, piping hot from purgatory, which we presume is not within the *bourne* of this world. The dread of what may happen after death (says he)

Makes us rather bear those *ills* we have,
Than fly to *others* that we know not of.

This declaration at least implies some knowledge of the other world, and expressly asserts, that there must be *ills* in that world, though what kind of *ills* they are, we do not know. The argument therefore may be reduced to this lemma: this world abounds with *ills* which I feel; the other world abounds with *ills*, the nature of which I do not know: therefore, I will rather bear those *ills* I have, "than fly to *others* which I know not of:" a deduction amounting to a certainty with respect to the only circumstance that could create a doubt, namely, whether in death he should rest from his misery; and if he was certain there were evils in the next world, as well as in this, he had no room to reason at all about the matter. What alone could justify his thinking on this subject, would have been the hope of flying from the *ills* of this world, without encountering any *others* in the next:

Nor is Hamlet more accurate in the following reflection:

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.

A bad conscience will make us cowards; but a good conscience will make us brave. It does not appear that any thing lay heavy on his conscience;

and from the premises we cannot help inferring, that conscience in this case was entirely out of the question. Hamlet was deterred from suicide by a full conviction, that in flying from one sea of troubles which he did know, he should fall into *another* which he did not know.

His whole chain of reasoning, therefore, seems inconsistent and incongruous. "I am doubtful whether I should live or do violence upon my own life: for I know not whether it is more honourable to bear misfortune patiently, than to exert myself in opposing misfortune, and by opposing, end it." Let us throw it into the form of a syllogism, it will stand thus: "I am oppressed with ills: I know not whether it is more honourable to bear those ills patiently, or to end them by taking arms against them; *ergo*, I am doubtful whether I should slay myself or live. To die is no more than to sleep; and to *say* that by a sleep we end the heart-ache, &c. "'tis a consummation devoutly to be wish'd." Now, to *say it* was of no consequence unless it had been true. "I am afraid of the dreams that may happen in that sleep of death; and I choose rather to bear those ills I have in this life than fly to *other ills* in that undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller ever returns. I have ills that are almost insupportable in this life. I know not what is in the next, because it is an undiscovered country: *ergo*, I'd rather bear those ills I have, than fly to others which I know not of." Here the conclusion is by no means warranted by the premises. "I am sore afflicted in this life; but I will rather bear the afflictions of this life than plunge myself in the afflictions of another life: *ergo*, conscience makes

cowards of us all." But this conclusion would justify the logician in saying, *negatur consequens*; for it is entirely detached both from the major and minor proposition.

The soliloquy is not less exceptionable in the propriety of expression than in the chain of argumentation.—“To die—to sleep—no more,” contains an ambiguity which all the art of punctuation cannot remove; for it may signify that “to die is to sleep no more; or the expression “no more” may be considered as an abrupt apostrophe in thinking, as if he meant to say—“no more of that reflection.”

“Ay, there’s the rub”—is a vulgarism beneath the dignity of Hamlet’s character, and the words that follow leave the sense imperfect;

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.

Not the dreams that might come, but the fear of what dreams might come, occasioned the pause or hesitation. *Respect* in the same line may be allowed to pass for consideration: but

The oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
according to the invariable acceptation of the words *wrong* and *contumely*, can signify nothing but the wrongs sustained by the oppressor, and the contumely or abuse thrown upon the proud man; though it is plain that Shakspeare used them in a different sense: neither is the word *spurn* a substantive! yet as such he has inserted it in these lines:

The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes.

If we consider the metaphors of the soliloquy, we shall find them jumbled together in a strange confusion.

If the metaphors were reduced to painting, we should find it a very difficult task, if not altogether impracticable, to represent with any propriety outrageous Fortune using her slings and arrows, between which indeed there is no sort of analogy in nature. Neither can any figure be more ridiculously absurd than that of a man taking arms against a sea, exclusive of the incongruous medley of slings, arrows, and seas, justled within the compass of one reflection. What follows is a strange rhapsody of broken images, of sleeping, dreaming, and shifting off a *coil*, which last conveys no idea that can be represented on canvass. A man may be exhibited shuffling off his garments or his chains : but how he should shuffle off a *coil*, which is another name for noise and tumult, we cannot comprehend. Then we have "long-lived Calamity," and "Time armed with whips and scorns;" and patient "Merit spurned at by Unworthiness;" and "Misery with a bare bodkin going to make his own *quietus*," which at best is but a mean metaphor. These are followed by figures "sweating under fardles of burdens," "puzzled with doubts," "shaking with fears," and "flying from evils." Finally, we see "resolution sicklied o'er with pale thought," a conception like that of representing health by sickness; and a "current of pith turned away, so as to lose the name of action," which is both an error in fancy and a solecism in sense. In a word, this soliloquy may be compared to the *ægri somnia*, and the *tabula, cujus vanæ fingentur species*.

But while we censure the chaos of broken, incongruous metaphors, we ought also to caution the young poet against the opposite extreme of pursuing a metaphor until the spirit is quite exhausted in a succession of cold conceits; such as we see in the following letter, said to be sent by Tamerlane to the Turkish emperor Bajazet. "Where is the monarch that dares oppose our arms? Where is the potentate who does not glory in being numbered among our vassals? As for thee, descended from a Turcoman mariner, since the vessel of thy unbounded ambition hath been wrecked in the gulph of thy self-love, it would be proper that thou shouldest furl the sails of thy temerity, and cast the anchor of repentance in the port of sincerity and justice, which is the harbour of safety; lest the tempest of our vengeance make thee perish in the sea of that punishment thou hast deserved."

But if these laboured conceits are ridiculous in poetry, they are still more inexcusable in prose: such as we find them frequently occur in Strada's *Bellum Belgicum*. "*Vix descenderat a prætorîâ navi Cæsar, cum fœda ilico exortâ in portu tempestas, classem impetu disjecit, prætoriam hausit; quasi non vecturam amplius Cæsarem Cæsarisque fortunam.*" "Cæsar had scarcely set his feet on shore, when a terrible tempest arising, shattered the fleet even in the harbour, and sent to the bottom the prætorian ship; as if he resolved it should no longer carry Cæsar and his fortunes."

Yet this is modest in comparison of the following flowers: "*Alli, pulsus è tormento catenis discerpti sectique, dimidiato corpore pugnabant sibi superstites, ac peremptæ partis ultores.*" "Others, disse-

vered and cut in twain by chain-shot, fought with one half of their bodies that remained, in revenge for the other half that was slain."

Homer, Horace, and even the chaste Virgil, is not free from conceits. The latter, speaking of a man's hand cut off in battle, says,

*Te decisa suum, Laride, dextera quærit :
Semianimesque micant digiti, ferrumque retractant :*

thus enduing the amputated hand with sense and volition. This, to be sure, is a violent figure, and hath been justly condemned by some accurate critics ; but we think they are too severe in extending the same censure to some other passages in the most admired authors.

Virgil in his Sixth Eclogue says,

*Omnia quæ, Phœbo quondam meditante, beatus
Audiit Eurotas, jussitque ediscere lauros,
Ille canit.*

Whate'er when Phœbus bless'd the Arcadian plain
Eurotas heard and taught his bays the strain,
The senior sung——

And Pope has copied the conceit in his Pastorals,

Thames heard the numbers as he flow'd along,
And bade his willows learn the mourning song.

Vida thus begins his First Eclogue :

*Dicite, vos, Musæ, et juvenum memorate querelas ;
Dicite: nam moras ipsas ad carmina cautes,
Et requiêsse suos perhibent vaga flumina cursus.*

Say, heavenly muse, their youthful frays rehearse ;
Begin, ye daughters of immortal verse ;
Exulting rocks have own'd the power of song,
And rivers listen'd as they flow'd along.

Racine adopts the same bold figure in his *Phædra* :

Le flot qui l'apporta recule epouvanté :

The wave that bore him, backwards shrunk appall'd.

Even Milton has indulged himself in the same licence of expression—

—As when to them who sail

Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past

Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow

Sabæan odour from the spicy shore

Of Araby the bless'd ; with such delay

Well pleased, they slack their course, and many a league

Cheer'd with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles.

Shakspeare says,

——I've seen

The ambitious ocean swell, and rage, and foam,

To be exalted with the threatening clouds.

And indeed more correct writers, both ancient and modern, abound with the same kind of figure, which is reconciled to propriety, and even invested with beauty, by the efficacy of the *prosopopœia*, which personifies the object. Thus, when Virgil says Enipeus heard the songs of Apollo, he raises up, as by enchantment, the idea of a river god crowned with sedges, his head raised above the stream, and in his countenance the expression of pleased attention. By the same magic we see, in the couplet quoted from Pope's *Pastorals*, old father Thames leaning upon his urn, and listening to the poet's strain.

Thus in the regions of poetry, all nature, even the passions and affections of the mind, may be personified into picturesque figures for the entertainment of the reader. Ocean smiles or frowns, as the

sea is calm or tempestuous; a triton rules on every angry billow; every mountain has its nymph; every stream its naiad; every tree its hamadryad; and every art its genius. We cannot therefore assent to those who censure Thomson as licentious for using the following figure:

O vale of bliss! O softly swelling hills!
On which the Power of Cultivation lies,
And joys to see the wonders of his toil.

We cannot conceive a more beautiful image than that of the Genius of Agriculture distinguished by the implements of his art, imbrowned with labour, glowing with health, crowned with a garland of foliage, flowers, and fruit, lying stretched at his ease on the brow of a gentle swelling hill, and contemplating with pleasure the happy effects of his own industry.

Neither can we join issue against Shakspeare for this comparison, which hath likewise incurred the censure of the critics:

— The noble sister of Poplicola,
The moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle,
That's curdled by the frost from purest snow,
And hangs on Dian's temple—

This is no more than illustrating a quality of the mind, by comparing it with a sensible object. If there is no impropriety in saying such a man is true as steel, firm as a rock, inflexible as an oak, unsteady as the ocean, or in describing a disposition cold as ice, or fickle as the wind; and these expressions are justified by constant practice; we shall hazard an assertion, that the comparison of a chaste woman to an icicle is proper and picturesque, as it obtains only in the circumstances of cold and purity; but

that the addition of its being curdled from the purest snow, and hanging on the temple of Diana, the patroness of virginity, heightens the whole into a most beautiful simile, that gives a very respectable and amiable idea of the character in question.

The simile is no more than an extended metaphor, introduced to illustrate and beautify the subject : it ought to be apt, striking, properly pursued, and adorned with all the graces of poetical melody. But a simile of this kind ought never to proceed from the mouth of a person under any great agitation of spirit ; such as a tragic character overwhelmed with grief, distracted by contending cares, or agonising in the pangs of death. The language of passion will not admit simile, which is always the result of study and deliberation. We will not allow a hero the privilege of a dying swan, which is said to chant its approaching fate in the most melodious strain ; and therefore nothing can be more ridiculously unnatural than the representation of a lover dying upon the stage with a laboured simile in his mouth.

The orientals, whose language was extremely figurative, have been very careless in the choice of their similes : provided the resemblance obtained in one circumstance, they minded not whether they disagreed with the subject in every other respect. Many instances of this defect in congruity may be culled from the most sublime parts of Scripture.

Homer has been blamed for the bad choice of his similes on some particular occasions. He compares Ajax to an ass in the *Iliad*, and Ulysses to a steak broiling on the coals in the *Odyssey*. His admirers have endeavoured to excuse him, by reminding us of the simplicity of the age in which he wrote ; but

they have not been able to prove that any ideas of dignity or importance were, even in those days, affixed to the character of an ass, or the quality of a beef-collop; therefore they were very improper illustrations for any situation, in which a hero ought to be represented.

Virgil has degraded the wife of king Latinus, by comparing her, when she was actuated by the Fury, to a top which the boys lash for diversion. This doubtless is a low image, though in other respects the comparison is not destitute of propriety; but he is much more justly censured for the following simile, which has no sort of reference to the subject. Speaking of Turnus, he says,

—medio dux agmine Turnus
Vertitur arma tenens, et toto vertice supra est.
Ceus septem surgens sedatis amnibus altus
Per tacitum Ganges; aut pingui flumine Nilus
Cum refluit campis, et jam se condidit alveo.

But Turnus, chief amidst the warrior train,
In armour towers the tallest on the plain.
The Ganges, thus by seven rich streams supplied,
A mighty mass devolves in silent pride.
Thus Nilus pours from his prolific urn,
When from the fields o'erflow'd his vagrant streams return.

These, no doubt, are majestic images; but they bear no sort of resemblance to a hero glittering in armour at the head of his forces.

Horace has been ridiculed by some shrewd critics for this comparison, which, however, we think is more defensible than the former. Addressing himself to Munatius Plancus, he says,

Albus ut obscuro detergit nubila cœlo
Sæpe Notus, neque parturit imbres

Perpetuos : sic tu sapiens finire memento
 Tristitiam, vitæque labores
 Molli, Plance, mero.

As Notus often, when the welkin lowers,
 Sweeps off the clouds, nor teems perpetual showers,
 So let thy wisdom, free from anxious strife,
 In mellow wine dissolve the cares of life.

Dunkin.

The analogy, it must be confessed, is not very striking; but nevertheless it is not altogether void of propriety. The poet reasons thus: as the south wind, though generally attended with rain, is often known to dispel the clouds, and render the weather serene; so do you, though generally on the rack of thought, remember to relax sometimes, and drown your cares in wine. As the south wind is not always moist, so you ought not always to be dry.

A few instances of inaccuracy, or mediocrity, can never derogate from the superlative merit of Homer and Virgil, whose poems are the great magazines replete with every species of beauty and magnificence, particularly abounding with similes which astonish, delight, and transport the reader.

Every simile ought not only to be well adapted to the subject, but also to include every excellence of description, and to be coloured with the warmest tints of poetry. Nothing can be more happily hit off than the following in the Georgics, to which the poet compares Orpheus lamenting his lost Eurydice.

Qualis populeâ mœrens Philomela sub umbrâ
 Amissos queritur fœtus, quos durus arator
 Observans nido implumes detraxit; at illa
 Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
 Integrat, et mœstis late loca questibus implet.

So Philomela from the umbrageous wood
 In strains melodious mourns her tender brood,
 Snatch'd from the nest by some rude ploughman's hand,
 On some lone bough the warbler takes her stand;
 The live-long night she mourns the cruel wrong;
 And hill and dale resound the plaintive song.

Here we not only find the most scrupulous propriety, and the happiest choice, in comparing the Thracian bard to Philomel the poet of the grove; but also the most beautiful description, containing a fine touch of the pathos, in which last particular indeed Virgil, in our opinion, excels all other poets, whether ancient or modern.

One would imagine that nature had exhausted itself in order to embellish the poems of Homer, Virgil, and Milton with similes and metaphors. The first of these very often uses the comparison of the wind, the whirlwind, the hail, the torrent, to express the rapidity of his combatants: but when he comes to describe the velocity of the immortal horses that drew the chariot of Juno, he raises his ideas to the subject, and, as Longinus observes, measures every leap by the whole breadth of the horizon.

Οσσον δ' ηεροιδες ανηρ ιδεν οφθαλμοισιν
 Ημενος εν σκοπιη, λευσσων επι οينوπα ποντον,
 Τοσσον επιθρωσκουσι θεων υψηλεις ιπποι.

Far as a watchman from some rock on high
 O'er the wide main extends his boundless eye;
 Through such a space of air, with thundering sound,
 At every leap the immortal coursers bound.

The celerity of this goddess seems to be a favourite idea with the poet; for in another place he compares it to the thought of a traveller revolving in his

mind the different places he had seen, and passing through them in imagination more swift than the lightning flies from east to west.

Homer's best similes have been copied by Virgil, and almost every succeeding poet, howsoever they may have varied in the manner of expression. In the third book of the Iliad, Menelaus seeing Paris, is compared to a hungry lion espying a hind or goat :

ΩΣΤΕ ΛΕΩΝ ΕΧΑΡΗ ΜΕΓΑΛΩ ΕΠΙ ΣΩΜΑΤΙ ΚΥΡΣΑΣ,
ΕΥΡΩΝ Η ΕΛΑΦΟΝ ΚΕΡΑΟΝ, Η ΑΓΡΙΟΝ ΑΙΓΑ, &c.

So joys the lion, if a branching deer
Or mountain goat his bulky prize appear.
In vain the youths oppose, the mastiffs bay;
The lordly savage rends the panting prey.
Thus fond of vengeance, with a furious bound,
In clanging arms he leaps upon the ground.

The Mantuan bard, in the tenth book of the Æneid, applies the same simile to Mezentius, when he beholds Acron in the battle.

Impastus stabula alta leo ceu sæpe peragrans
(Suadet enim vesana fames) si forte fugacem
Conspexit capream, aut surgentem in cornua cervum;
Gaudet hians immane, comasque arrexit, et hæret
Visceribus super accumbens: lavit improba teter
Ora cruor.—

Then as a hungry lion, who beholds
A gamesome goat who frisks about the folds,
Or beamy stag that grazes on the plain;
He runs, he roars, he shakes his rising mane;
He grins and opens wide his greedy jaws,
The prey lies panting underneath his paws:
He fills his famish'd maw, his mouth runs o'er
With unchew'd morsels, while he churns the gore.

Dryden.

The reader will perceive that Virgil has improved the simile in one particular, and in another fallen short of his original. The description of the lion shaking his mane, opening his hideous jaws distained with the blood of his prey, is great and picturesque : but, on the other hand, he has omitted the circumstance of devouring it without being intimidated, or restrained by the dogs and youths that surround him ; a circumstance that adds greatly to our idea of his strength, intrepidity, and importance.

XVII.

ON HYPERBOLE.

OF all the figures in poetry, that called the hyperbole is managed with the greatest difficulty. The hyperbole is an exaggeration with which the muse is indulged, for the better illustration of her subject when she is warmed into enthusiasm. Quintilian calls it an ornament of the bolder kind. Demetrius Phalereus is still more severe. He says, the hyperbole is of all forms of speech the most frigid. *Μαλιστα δε ἡ Ὑπερβολὴ ψυχροτάτον πάντων* : but this must be understood with some grains of allowance. Poetry is animated by the passions ; and all the passions exaggerate. Passion itself is a magnifying medium. There are beautiful instances of hyperbole in the Scripture, which a reader of sensibility cannot read without being strongly affected. The difficulty lies in choosing such hyperboles as the subject will admit of ; for, according to the definition of Theophrastus, the frigid in style is that which exceeds the expression suitable to the subject. The

judgment does not revolt against Homer for representing the horses of Erichonius running over the standing corn without breaking off the heads, because the whole is considered as a fable, and the north wind is represented as their sire; but the imagination is a little startled, when Virgil, in imitation of this hyperbole, exhibits Camilla as flying over it without even touching the tops.

*Illa vel intactæ segetis per summa volaret
Gramina:—*

This elegant author, we are afraid, has upon some other occasions degenerated into the frigid, in straining to improve upon his great master.

Homer in the *Odyssey*, a work which Longinus does not scruple to charge with bearing the marks of old age, describes a storm in which all the four winds were concerned together.

*Συν δ' Ευρος τε Νοτος τ' επεσε, Ζεφυρος τε δυσαης,
Και Βορεης αιθρηγενετης μεγα λυμα κυλινδων.*

We know that such a contention of contrary blasts could not possibly exist in nature; for even in hurricanes the winds blow alternately from different points of the compass. Nevertheless, Virgil adopts the description, and adds to its extravagance.

*Incubuère mari, totumque à sedibus imis
Una Eurusque Notusque ruunt, creberque procellis
Africus.*

Here the winds not only blow together, but they turn the whole body of the ocean topsy turvy.—

East, west, and south, engage with furious sweep,
And from its lowest bed upturn the foaming deep.

The north wind, however, is still more mischievous.—

—Stridens Aquilone procella

Velum adversa ferit, fluctusque ad sidera tollit.

The sail then Boreas rends with hideous cry,
And whirls the maddening billows to the sky.

The motion of the sea between Scylla and Charybdis is still more magnified; and Ætna is exhibited as throwing out volumes of flames, which brush the stars.* Such expressions as these are not intended as a real representation of the thing specified; they are designed to strike the reader's imagination; but they generally serve as marks of the author's sinking under his own ideas, who, apprehensive of injuring the greatness of his own conception, is hurried into excess and extravagance.

Quintilian allows the use of hyperbole, when words are wanting to express any thing in its just strength or due energy: then, he says, it is better to exceed in expression, than fall short of the conception: but he likewise observes, that there is no figure or form of speech so apt to run into fustian. *Nec alia magis via in κακοζήλιαν itur.*

If the chaste Virgil has thus trespassed upon poetical probability, what can we expect from Lucan but hyperboles even more ridiculously extravagant? He represents the winds in contest, the sea in suspense, doubting to which it shall give way. He affirms that its motion would have been so violent as to produce a second deluge, had not Jupiter kept it under by the clouds; and as to the ship,

Nubila tanguntur velis, et terra carina.

* Speaking of the first he says,

*Tollimur in cælum curvato gurgite, et idem
Subductâ ad manes imos descendimus undâ.*

Of the other,

Attollitque globos flammæ, et sidera lambit.

during this dreadful uproar, *the sails touch the clouds, while the keel strikes the ground.*

This image of dashing water at the stars, sir Richard Blackmore has produced in colours truly ridiculous. Describing spouting whales in his Prince Arthur, he makes the following comparison :

Like some prodigious water-engine made
To play on heaven, if fire should heaven invade.

The great fault in all these instances is a deviation from propriety, owing to the erroneous judgment of the writer, who, endeavouring to captivate the admiration with novelty, very often shocks the understanding with extravagance. Of this nature is the whole description of the Cyclops, both in the *Odyssey* of Homer and in the *Æneid* of Virgil. It must be owned however that the Latin poet with all his merit is more apt than his great original to dazzle us with false fire, and practise upon the imagination with gay conceits, that will not bear the critic's examination. There is not in any of Homer's works now subsisting such an example of the false sublime, as Virgil's description of the thunder-bolts forging under the hammers of the Cyclops.

Tres imbris torti radios, tres nubis aquosæ
Addiderant, rutili tres ignis et alitis Austri.

Three rays of writhen rain, of fire three more,
Of winged southern winds, and cloudy store,
As many parts, the dreadful mixture frame.

Dryden.

This is altogether a fantastic piece of affectation, of which we can form no sensible image, and serves to chill the fancy, rather than warm the admiration, of a judging reader.

Extravagant hyperbole is a weed that grows in great plenty through the works of our admired Shakspeare. In the following description, which hath been much celebrated, one sees he has had an eye to Virgil's thunderbolts.

O, then I see queen Mab hath been with you.
 She is the fancy's midwife, and she comes
 In shape no bigger than an agate-stone
 On the fore-finger of an alderman,
 Drawn with a team of little atomies,
 Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep:
 Her waggon spokes made of long spinners' legs.
 The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;
 The traces, of the smallest spider's web;
 The collars, of the *moonshine's watery beams*, &c.

Even in describing fantastic beings, there is a propriety to be observed; but surely nothing can be more revolting to common sense, than this numbering of the *moon beams* among the other implements of queen Mab's harness, which, though extremely slender and diminutive, are nevertheless objects of the touch, and may be conceived capable of use.

The ode and satire admit of the boldest hyperboles: such exaggerations suit the impetuous warmth of the one; and in the other have a good effect in exposing folly, and exciting horror against vice. They may be likewise successfully used in Comedy, for moving and managing the powers of ridicule.

XVIII.

ON VERSIFICATION.

VERSE is an harmonious arrangement of long and short syllables, adapted to different kinds of poetry,

and owes its origin entirely to the measured cadence, or music, which was used when the first songs or hymns were recited. This music, divided into different parts, required a regular return of the same measure, and thus every *strophe*, *antistrophe*, and *stanza*, contained the same number of feet. To know what constituted the different kinds of rhythmical feet among the ancients, with respect to the number and quantity of their syllables, we have nothing to do but to consult those who have written on grammar and prosody: it is the business of a schoolmaster rather than the accomplishment of a man of taste.

Various essays have been made in different countries to compare the characters of ancient and modern versification, and to point out the difference beyond any possibility of mistake. But they have made distinctions, where in fact there was no difference, and left the criterion unobserved. They have transferred the name of rhyme to a regular repetition of the same sound at the end of the line, and set up this vile monotony as the characteristic of modern verse, in contradistinction to the feet of the ancients, which they pretend the poetry of modern languages will not admit.

Rhyme, from the Greek word *ῥυθμος*, is nothing else but number, which was essential to the ancient, as well as to the modern versification. As to the jingle of similar sounds, though it was never used by the ancients in any regular return in the middle or at the end of the line, and was by no means deemed essential to the versification, yet they did not reject it as a blemish, where it occurred without the appearance of constraint. We meet with it

often in the epithets of Homer,—*αργυρεοιο βιοιο* — *αναξ ανδρων Αγαμεμνων*—almost the whole first ode of Anacreon is what we call rhyme. The following line of Virgil has been admired for the similitude of sound in the first two words.

Ore, Arethusa, tuo Siculis confunditur undis.

Rythmus, or number, is certainly essential to verse, whether in the dead or living languages; and the real difference between the two is this: the number in ancient verse relates to the feet, and in modern poetry to the syllables; for to assert that modern poetry has no feet, is a ridiculous absurdity. The feet, that principally enter into the composition of Greek and Latin verses, are either of two or three syllables: those of two syllables are either both long, as the spondee; or both short, as the pyrrhic; or one short and the other long, as the iambic; or one long, and the other short, as the trochee. Those of three syllables are the dactyl, of one long and two short syllables; the anapest, of two short and one long; the tribrachium, of three short; and the molossus, of three long.

From the different combinations of these feet, restricted to certain numbers, the ancients formed their different kinds of verses, such as the hexameter, or heroic, distinguished by six feet dactyls and spondees, the fifth being always a dactyl, and the last a spondee: *e. g.*

1 2 3 4 5 6
Principi-is obs-ta, se-ro medi-cina pa-ratur.

The pentameter of five feet, dactyls and spondees, or of six, reckoning two cæsuras.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Cum mala per lon-gas invalu-ere mo-ras.

They had likewise the iambic of three sorts, the dimeter, the trimeter, and the tetrameter, and all the different kinds of lyric verse specified in the odes of Sappho, Alcæus, Anacreon, and Horace. Each of these was distinguished by the number, as well as by the species of their feet; so that they were doubly restricted. Now all the feet of the ancient poetry are still found in the versification of living languages; for as cadence was regulated by the ear, it was impossible for a man to write melodious verse without naturally falling into the use of ancient feet, though perhaps he neither knows their measure nor denomination. Thus Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, and all our poets, abound with dactyls, spondees, trochees, anapests, &c. which they used indiscriminately in all kinds of composition, whether tragic, epic, pastoral, or ode, having in this particular greatly the advantage of the ancients, who were restricted to particular kinds of feet in particular kinds of verse. If we then are confined with the fetters of what is called rhyme, they were restricted to particular species of feet; so that the advantages and disadvantages are pretty equally balanced: but indeed the English are more free in this particular than any other modern nation. They not only use blank-verse in tragedy and the epic, but even in lyric poetry. Milton's translation of Horace's Ode to Pyrrha is universally known, and generally admired, in our opinion, much above its merit. There is an ode extant without rhyme, addressed to evening, by the late Mr. Collins, much more beautiful; and Mr. Warton, with some others, has happily succeeded in divers occasional pieces, that are free of

this restraint : but the number in all of these depends upon the syllables, and not upon the feet, which are unlimited.

It is generally supposed that the genius of the English language will not admit of Greek or Latin measure : but this, we apprehend, is a mistake owing to the prejudice of education. It is impossible that the same measure, composed of the same times, should have a good effect upon the ear in one language, and a bad effect in another. The truth is, we have been accustomed from our infancy to the numbers of English poetry, and the very sound and signification of the words dispose the ear to receive them in a certain manner ; so that its disappointment must be attended with a disagreeable sensation. In imbibing the first rudiments of education, we acquire, as it were, another ear for the numbers of Greek and Latin poetry, and this being reserved entirely for the sounds and significations of the words that constitute those dead languages, will not easily accommodate itself to the sounds of our vernacular tongue, though conveyed in the same time and measure. In a word, Latin and Greek have annexed to them the ideas of the ancient measure, from which they are not easily disjoined. But we will venture to say, this difficulty might be surmounted by an effort of attention and a little practice ; and in that case we should in time be as well pleased with English as with Latin hexameters.

Sir Philip Sidney is said to have miscarried in his essays ; but his miscarriage was no more than that of failing in an attempt to introduce a new fashion. The failure was not owing to any defect

or imperfection in the scheme, but to the want of taste, to the irresolution and ignorance of the public. Without all doubt, the ancient measure, so different from that of modern poetry, must have appeared remarkably uncouth to people in general, who were ignorant of the classics; and nothing but the countenance and perseverance of the learned could reconcile them to the alteration. We have seen several late specimens of English hexameters and sapphics, so happily composed, that by attaching them to the idea of ancient measure, we found them in all respects as melodious and agreeable to the ear, as the works of Virgil and Anacreon, or Horace.

Though the number of syllables distinguishes the nature of the English verse from that of the Greek and Latin, it constitutes neither harmony, grace, nor expression. These must depend upon the choice of words, the seat of the accent, the pause, and the cadence. The accent, or tone, is understood to be an elevation or sinking of the voice in reciting: the pause is a rest, that divides the verse into two parts, each of them called an hemistich. The pause and accent in English poetry vary occasionally, according to the meaning of the words; so that the hemistich does not always consist of an equal number of syllables; and this variety is agreeable, as it prevents a dull-repetition of regular stops, like those in the French versification, every line of which is divided by a pause exactly in the middle. The cadence comprehends that poetical style, which animates every line; that propriety, which gives strength and expression; that numerosity, which renders the verse smooth, flowing, and harmonious;

that significancy, which marks the passions, and in many cases makes the sound an echo to the sense. The Greek and Latin languages, in being copious and ductile, are susceptible of a vast variety of cadences, which the living languages will not admit; and of these a reader of any ear will judge for himself.

XIX.

SCHOOLS OF MUSIC, OBJECTIONS THERETO, AND ANSWERS.

A SCHOOL in the polite arts properly signifies that succession of artists, which has learned the principles of the art from some eminent master, either by hearing his lessons, or studying his works; and consequently who imitate his manner either through design or from habit. Musicians seem agreed in making only three principal schools in music; namely, the school of Pergolese, in Italy, of Lully, in France, and of Handel, in England; though some are for making Rameau the founder of a new school, different from those of the former, as he is the inventor of beauties peculiarly his own.

Without all doubt Pergolese's music deserves the first rank: though excelling neither in variety of movements, number of parts, nor unexpected flights, yet he is universally allowed to be the musical Raphael of Italy. This great master's principal art consisted in knowing how to excite our passions by sounds, which seem frequently opposite to the passion they would express: by slow solemn sounds he is sometimes known to throw us into all the rage

of battle; and even by faster movements he excites melancholy in every heart, that sounds are capable of affecting. This is a talent which seems born with the artist. We are unable to tell why such sounds affect us: they seem no way imitative of the passion they would express, but operate upon us by an inexpressible sympathy, the original of which is as inscrutable as the secret springs of life itself. To this excellence he adds another, in which he is superior to every other artist of the profession, the happy transition from one passion to another. No dramatic poet better knows to prepare his incidents than he: the audience are pleased in those intervals of passion with the delicate, the simple harmony, if I may so express it, in which the parts are all thrown into fugues, or often are barely unison. His melodies also, where no passion is expressed, give equal pleasure from this delicate simplicity: and I need only instance that song in the *Serva Padrona*, which begins *Lo conosco a quegl' ocelli*, as one of the finest instances of excellence in the duo.

The Italian artists in general have followed his manner, yet seem fond of embellishing the delicate simplicity of the original. Their style in music seems somewhat to resemble that of Seneca in writing, where there are some beautiful starts of thought; but the whole is filled with studied elegance and unassuming affectation.

Lully in France first attempted the improvement of their music, which in general resembled that of our old solemn chants in churches. It is worthy of remark in general, that the music of every country is solemn in proportion as the inhabitants are merry; or, in other words, the merriest, sprightliest

nations are remarked for having the slowest music; and those, whose character it is to be melancholy, are pleased with the most brisk and airy movements. Thus, in France, Poland, Ireland, and Switzerland, the national music is slow, melancholy, and solemn; in Italy, England, Spain, and Germany, it is faster, proportionably as the people are grave. Lully only changed a bad manner which he found, for a bad one of his own. His drowsy pieces are played still to the most sprightly audience that can be conceived; and even though Rameau, who is at once a musician and philosopher, has shown both by precept and example, what improvements French music may still admit of, yet his countrymen seem little convinced by his reasonings; and the Pont-neuf taste, as it is called, still prevails in their best performances.

The English school was first planned by Purcell: he attempted to unite the Italian manner that prevailed in his time, with the ancient Celtic carol and the Scotch ballad, which probably had also its origin in Italy; for some of the best Scotch ballads ("The Broom of Cowdenknows," for instance) are still ascribed to David Rizzio. But be that as it will, his manner was something peculiar to the English; and he might have continued as head of the English school, had not his merits been entirely eclipsed by Handel. Handel, though originally a German, yet adopted the English manner: he had long laboured to please by Italian composition, but without success; and though his English oratorios are accounted inimitable, yet his Italian operas are fallen into oblivion. Pergolese excelled in passionate sublimity; Lully was remarkable for creating a new

species of music, where all is elegant, but nothing passionate or sublime: Handel's true characteristic is sublimity; he has employed all the variety of sounds and parts in all his pieces: the performances of the rest may be pleasing, though executed by few performers; his require the full band. The attention is awakened, the soul is roused up at his pieces; but distinct passion is seldom expressed. In this particular he has seldom found success: he has been obliged, in order to express passion, to imitate words by sounds, which though it gives the pleasure which imitation always produces, yet it fails of exciting those lasting affections, which it is in the power of sounds to produce. In a word, no man ever understood harmony so well as he; but in melody he has been exceeded by several.

[The following Objections to the preceding Essay having been addressed to Dr. Smollett (as editor of the British Magazine, in which it first appeared); that gentleman, with equal candour and politeness, communicated the MS. to Dr. Goldsmith, who returned his answers to the objector in the notes annexed.—Edit.]

PERMIT me to object against some things advanced in the paper on the subject of THE DIFFERENT SCHOOLS OF MUSIC. The author of this article seems too hasty in degrading the harmonious* Pur-

* Had the objector said *melodious* Purcel, it had testified at least a greater acquaintance with music, and Purcel's peculiar excellence. Purcel in melody is frequently great; his song made in his last sickness, called Rosy Bowers, is a fine instance of this; but in harmony he is far short of the meanest of our modern composers, his fullest harmonies

cel from the head of the English school, to erect in his room a foreigner (Handel), who has not yet formed any school.* The gentleman, when he comes to communicate his thoughts upon the different schools of painting, may as well place Rubens at the head of the English painters, because he left some monuments of his art in England.† He says,

being exceedingly simple. His opera of Prince Arthur, the words of which were Dryden's, is reckoned his finest piece. But what is that, in point of harmony, to what we every day hear from modern masters? In short, with respect to genius, Purcel had a fine one: he greatly improved an art but little known in England before his time: for this he deserves our applause; but the present prevailing taste in music is very different from what he left it, and who was the improver since his time we shall see by and by.

* Handel may be said as justly as any man, not Pergolese excepted, to have founded a new school of music. When he first came into England, his music was entirely Italian: he composed for the opera; and though even then his pieces were liked, yet did they not meet with universal approbation. In those he has too servilely imitated the modern vitiated Italian taste, by placing what foreigners call the *point d'orgue* too closely and injudiciously. But in his oratorios he is perfectly an original genius. In these, by steering between the manners of Italy and England, he has struck out new harmonies, and formed a species of music different from all others. He has left some excellent and eminent scholars, particularly Worgan and Smith, who compose nearly in his manner; a manner as different from Purcel's as from that of modern Italy. Consequently Handel may be placed at the head of the English school.

† The objector will not have Handel's school to be called an English school, because he was a German. Handel in a great measure found in England those essential differences, which characterise his music; we have already shown that he had them not upon his arrival. Had Rubens come over to England but moderately skilled in his art: had he learned

that Handel, though *originally* a German (as most certainly he was, and continued so to his last breath), yet adopted the English manner.* Yes, to be sure, just as much as Rubens the painter did. Your correspondent, in the course of his discoveries, tells us besides, that some of the best Scotch ballads ("The Broom of Cowdenknows," for instance) are still ascribed to David Rizzio.† This Rizzio must have

here all his excellency in colouring, and correctness of designing; had he left several scholars excellent in his manner behind him; I should not scruple to call the school erected by him, the English school of painting. Not the country in which a man is born, but his peculiar style, either in painting or in music—that constitutes him of this or that school. Thus Champagne, who painted in the manner of the French school, is always placed among the painters of that school, though he was born in Flanders, and should consequently, by the objector's rule, be placed among the Flemish painters. Kneller is placed in the German school, and Ostade in the Dutch, though born in the same city. Primaticci, who may be truly said to have founded the Roman school, was born in Bologna; though, if his country was to determine his school, he should have been placed in the Lombard. There might several other instances be produced; but these, it is hoped, will be sufficient to prove that Handel, though a German, may be placed at the head of the English school.

* Handel was originally a German; but by a long continuance in England he might have been looked upon as naturalized to the country. I don't pretend to be a fine writer: however, if the gentleman dislikes the expression (although he must be convinced it is a common one), I wish it were mended.

† I said that they were ascribed to David Rizzio. That they are, the objector need only look into Mr. Oswald's Collection of Scotch tunes, and he will there find not only The Broom of Cowdenknows, but also the Black Eagle, and several other of the best Scotch tunes ascribed to him. Though this might be a sufficient answer, yet I must be per-

been a most original genius, or have possessed extraordinary imitative powers, to have come, so advanced in life as he did, from Italy, and strike so far out of the common road of his own country's music.

A mere fiddler,* a shallow coxcomb, a giddy,

mitted to go further, to tell the objector the opinions of our best modern musicians in this particular. It is the opinion of the melodious Geminiani, that we have in the dominions of Great Britain no original music, except the Irish; the Scotch and English being originally borrowed from the Italians. And that his opinion in this respect is just (for I would not be swayed merely by authorities) it is very reasonable to suppose, first, from the conformity between the Scotch and ancient Italian music. They who compare the old French vaudevilles, brought from Italy by Rinuccini, with those pieces ascribed to David Rizzio, who was pretty nearly contemporary with him, will find a strong resemblance, notwithstanding the opposite characters of the two nations, which have preserved those pieces. When I would have them compared, I mean I would have their bases compared, by which the similitude may be most exactly seen. Secondly, it is reasonable from the ancient music of the Scotch, which is still preserved in the Highlands, and which bears no resemblance at all to the music of the Low Country. The Highland tunes are sung to Irish words, and flow entirely in the Irish manner. On the other hand, the Lowland music is always sung to English words.

* David Rizzio was neither a mere fiddler, nor a shallow coxcomb, nor a worthless fellow, nor a stranger in Scotland. He had indeed been brought over from Piedmont, to be put at the head of a band of music, by king James V. one of the most elegant princes of his time, an exquisite judge of music, as well as of poetry, architecture, and all the fine arts. Rizzio, at the time of his death, had been above twenty years in Scotland; he was secretary to the queen, and at the same time an agent from the pope; so that he could not be so obscure as he has been represented.

insolent, worthless fellow, to compose such pieces as nothing but genuine sensibility of mind, and an exquisite feeling of those passions, which animate only the finest souls, could dictate; and in a manner too so extravagantly distant from that to which he had all his life been accustomed!—It is impossible.—He might indeed have had presumption enough to add some flourishes to a few favourite airs, like a cobbler of old plays, when he takes it upon him to mend Shakspeare. So far he might go; but further it is impossible for any one to believe, that has but just ear enough to distinguish between the Italian and Scotch music, and is disposed to consider the subject with the least degree of attention.

March 18, 1760.

S. R.

XX.

ON CAROLAN, THE IRISH BARD.

THERE can be perhaps no greater entertainment than to compare the rude Celtic simplicity with modern refinement. Books however seem incapable of furnishing the parallel; and to be acquainted with the ancient manners of our own ancestors, we should endeavour to look for their remains in those countries, which, being in some measure retired from an intercourse with other nations, are still untinged with foreign refinement, language, or breeding.

The Irish will satisfy curiosity in this respect preferably to all other nations I have seen. They in several parts of that country still adhere to their

ancient language, dress, furniture, and superstitions; several customs exist among them, that still speak their original; and in some respects Cæsar's description of the ancient Britons is applicable to them.

Their bards, in particular, are still held in great veneration among them: those traditional heralds are invited to every funeral, in order to fill up the intervals of the howl with their songs and harps. In these they rehearse the actions of the ancestors of the deceased, bewail the bondage of their country under the English government, and generally conclude with advising the young men and maidens to make the best use of their time, for they will soon, for all their present bloom, be stretched under the table like the dead body before them.

Of all the bards this country ever produced, the last and the greatest was CAROLAN THE BLIND. He was at once a poet, a musician, a composer, and sung his own verses to his harp. The original natives never mention his name without rapture; both his poetry and music they have by heart; and even some of the English themselves, who have been transplanted there, find his music extremely pleasing. A song beginning, "O Rourke's noble fare will ne'er be forgot," translated by Dean Swift, is of his composition; which, though perhaps by this means the best known of his pieces, is yet by no means the most deserving. His songs in general may be compared to those of Pindar, as they have frequently the same flights of imagination, and are composed (I don't say written, for he could not write) merely to flatter some man of fortune upon some excellence of the same kind. In these one

man is praised for the excellence of his stable, as in Pindar, another for his hospitality, a third for the beauty of his wife and children, and a fourth for the antiquity of his family. Whenever any of the original natives of distinction were assembled at feasting or revelling, Carolan was generally there, where he was always ready with his harp to celebrate their praises. He seemed by nature formed for his profession; for as he was born blind, so also he was possessed of a most astonishing memory, and a facetious turn of thinking, which gave his entertainers infinite satisfaction. Being once at the house of an Irish nobleman, where there was a musician present, who was eminent in the profession, Carolan immediately challenged him to a trial of skill. To carry the jest forward, his lordship persuaded the musician to accept the challenge, and he accordingly played over on his fiddle the fifth concerto of Vivaldi. Carolan, immediately taking his harp, played over the whole piece after him, without missing a note, though he had never heard it before, which produced some surprise; but their astonishment increased, when he assured them he could make a concerto in the same taste himself, which he instantly composed, and that with such a spirit and elegance, that it may compare (for we have it still) with the finest compositions of Italy.

His death was not more remarkable than his life. Homer was never more fond of a glass than he; he would drink whole pints of Usquebaugh, and, as he used to think, without any ill consequence. His intemperance however in this respect at length brought on an incurable disorder, and when just at

the point of death, he called for a cup of his beloved liquor. Those who were standing round him, surprised at the demand, endeavoured to persuade him to the contrary; but he persisted, and, when the bowl was brought him, attempted to drink, but could not; wherefore, giving away the bowl, he observed with a smile, that it would be hard if two such friends as he and the cup should part at least without kissing; and then expired.

XXI.

ON THE TENANTS OF THE LEASOWES.

Of all men, who form gay illusions of distant happiness, perhaps a poet is the most sanguine. Such is the ardour of his hopes, that they often are equal to actual enjoyment; and he feels more in expectation than actual fruition. I have often regarded a character of this kind with some degree of envy. A man possessed of such warm imagination commands all nature, and arrogates possessions, of which the owner has a blunter relish. While life continues, the alluring prospect lies before him; he travels in the pursuit with confidence, and resigns it only with his last breath.

It is this happy confidence which gives life its true relish, and keeps up our spirits amidst every distress and disappointment. How much less would be done, if a man knew how little he can do! How wretched a creature would he be, if he saw the end as well as the beginning of his projects! He would have nothing left but to sit down in torpid despair, and exchange employment for actual calamity.

I was led into this train of thinking upon lately visiting,* the beautiful gardens of the late Mr. Shenstone, who was himself a poet, and possessed of that warm imagination, which made him ever foremost in the pursuit of flying happiness. Could he but have foreseen the end of all his schemes, for whom he was improving, and what changes his designs were to undergo, he would have scarcely amused his innocent life with what for several years employed him in a most harmless manner, and abridged his scanty fortune. As the progress of this improvement is a true picture of sublunary vicissitude, I could not help calling up my imagination, which, while I walked pensively along, suggested the following reverie.

As I was turning my back upon a beautiful piece of water enlivened with cascades and rock-work, and entering a dark walk by which ran a prattling brook, the genius of the place appeared before me, but more resembling the God of Time, than him more particularly appointed to the care of gardens. Instead of shears he bore a scythe; and he appeared rather with the implements of husbandry, than those of a modern gardener. Having remembered this place in its pristine beauty, I could not help condoling with him on its present ruinous situation. I spoke to him of the many alterations which had been made, and all for the worse; of the many shades which had been taken away, of the bowers that were destroyed by neglect, and the hedge-rows that were spoiled by clipping. The genius with a sigh received my condolment, and assured me that he was equally a martyr to ignorance and

taste, to refinement and rusticity. Seeing me desirous of knowing further, he went on :

“ You see, in the place before you, the paternal inheritance of a poet ; and to a man content with little, fully sufficient for his subsistence ; but a strong imagination and a long acquaintance with the rich, are dangerous foes to contentment. Our poet, instead of sitting down to enjoy life, resolved to prepare for its future enjoyment ; and set about converting a place of profit into a scene of pleasure. This he at first supposed could be accomplished at a small expense ; and he was willing for a while to stint his income, to have an opportunity of displaying his taste. The improvement in this manner went forward ; one beauty attained led him to wish for some other ; but he still hoped that every emendation would be the last. It was now therefore found that the improvement exceeded the subsidy, that the place was grown too large and too fine for the inhabitant. But that pride which was once exhibited could not retire ; the garden was made for the owner, and though it was become unfit for him, he could not willingly resign it to another. Thus the first idea of its beauties contributing to the happiness of his life was found unfaithful ; so that, instead of looking within for satisfaction, he began to think of having recourse to the praises of those who came to visit his improvement.

“ In consequence of this hope, which now took possession of his mind, the gardens were opened to the visits of every stranger ; and the country flocked round to walk, to criticise, to admire, and to do mischief. He soon found, that the admirers

of his taste left by no means such strong marks of their applause, as the envious did of their malignity. All the windows of his temples, and the walls of his retreats, were impressed with the characters of profaneness, ignorance, and obscenity; his hedges were broken, his statues and urns defaced, and his lawns worn bare. It was now therefore necessary to shut up the gardens once more, and to deprive the public of that happiness, which had before ceased to be his own.

“ In this situation the poet continued for a time in the character of a jealous lover, fond of the beauty he keeps, but unable to supply the extravagance of every demand. The garden by this time was completely grown and finished; the marks of art were covered up by the luxuriance of nature; the winding walks were grown dark; the brook assumed a natural sylvage; and the rocks were covered with moss. Nothing now remained but to enjoy the beauties of the place, when the poor poet died, and his garden was obliged to be sold for the benefit of those, who had contributed to its embellishment.

“ The beauties of the place had now for some time been celebrated as well in prose as in verse; and all men of taste wished for so envied a spot, where every urn was marked with the poet’s pencil, and every walk awakened genius and meditation. The first purchaser was one Mr. Truepenny, a button-maker, who was possessed of three thousand pounds, and was willing also to be possessed of taste and genius.

“ As the poet’s ideas were for the natural wildness of the landscape, the button-maker’s were for the

more regular production of art. He conceived perhaps that as it is a beauty in a button to be of a regular pattern, so the same regularity ought to obtain in a landscape. Be this as it will, he employed the shears to some purpose; he clipped up the hedges, cut down the gloomy walks, made vistas upon the stables and hog-sties, and showed his friends that a man of taste should always be doing.

“ The next candidate for taste and genius was a captain of a ship, who bought the garden because the former possessor could find nothing more to mend; but unfortunately he had taste too. His great passion lay in building, in making Chinese temples and cage-work summer-houses. As the place before had an appearance of retirement, and inspired meditation, he gave it a more peopled air; every turning presented a cottage, or ice-house, or a temple; the improvement was converted into a little city, and it only wanted inhabitants to give it the air of a village in the East Indies.

“ In this manner, in less than ten years, the improvement has gone through the hands of as many proprietors, who were all willing to have taste, and to show their taste too. As the place had received its best finishing from the hand of the first possessor, so every innovator only lent a hand to do mischief. Those parts which were obscure have been enlightened; those walks which led naturally, have been twisted into serpentine windings. The colour of the flowers of the field is not more various than the variety of tastes that have been employed here, and all in direct contradiction to

the original aim of the first improver. Could the original possessor but revive, with what a sorrowful heart would he look upon his favourite spot again ! He would scarcely recollect a dryad or a wood-nymph of his former acquaintance, and might perhaps find himself as much a stranger in his own plantation, as in the deserts of Siberia."

XXII.

ON SENTIMENTAL COMEDY.

THE theatre, like all other amusements, has its fashions and its prejudices ; and when satiated with its excellence, mankind begin to mistake change for improvement. For some years tragedy was the reigning entertainment ; but of late it has entirely given way to comedy, and our best efforts are now exerted in these lighter kinds of composition. The pompous train, the swelling phrase, and the unnatural rant, are displaced for that natural portrait of human folly and frailty, of which all are judges, because all have sat for the picture.

But as in describing nature, it is presented with a double face, either of mirth or sadness, our modern writers find themselves at a loss which chiefly to copy from ; and it is now debated, whether the exhibition of human distress is likely to afford the mind more entertainment than that of human absurdity?

Comedy is defined by Aristotle to be a picture of the frailties of the lower part of mankind, to distinguish it from tragedy, which is an exhibition of the misfortunes of the great. When comedy there-

fore ascends to produce the characters of princes or generals upon the stage, it is out of its walk, since low life and middle life are entirely its object. The principal question therefore is, whether in describing low or middle life, an exhibition of its follies be not preferable to a detail of its calamities; or, in other words, which deserves the preference; the weeping sentimental comedy, so much in fashion at present,* or the laughing and even low comedy, which seems to have been last exhibited by Vanbrugh and Cibber?

If we apply to authorities, all the great masters in the dramatic art have but one opinion. Their rule is, that as tragedy displays the calamities of the great, so comedy should excite our laughter, by ridiculously exhibiting the follies of the lower part of mankind. Boileau, one of the best modern critics, asserts, that comedy will not admit of tragic distress:

Le comique, ennemi des soupirs et des pleurs,
N'admet point dans ses vers des tragiques douleurs.

Nor is this rule without the strongest foundation in nature, as the distresses of the mean by no means affect us so strongly as the calamities of the great. When tragedy exhibits to us some great man fallen from his height, and struggling with want and adversity, we feel his situation in the same manner as we suppose he himself must feel, and our pity is increased in proportion to the height from which he fell. On the contrary, we do not so strongly sympathize with one born in humbler circumstances, and encountering accidental distress: so that while we melt for Belisarius, we scarcely give halfpence

to the beggar, who accosts us in the street. The one has our pity; the other our contempt. Distress therefore is the proper object of tragedy, since the great excite our pity by their fall; but not equally so of comedy, since the actors employed in it are originally so mean, that they sink but little by their fall.

Since the first origin of the stage, tragedy and comedy have run in distinct channels, and never till of late encroached upon the provinces of each other. Terence, who seems to have made the nearest approaches, always judiciously stops short before he comes to the downright pathetic; and yet he is even reproached by Cæsar for wanting the *vis comica*. All the other comic writers of antiquity aim only at rendering folly or vice ridiculous, but never exalt their characters into buskined pomp, or make what Voltaire humorously calls a *Tradesman's Tragedy*.

Yet, notwithstanding this weight of authority, and the universal practice of former ages, a new species of dramatic composition has been introduced under the name of *sentimental* comedy, in which the virtues of private life are exhibited, rather than the vices exposed; and the distresses, rather than the faults of mankind, make our interest in the piece. These comedies have had of late great success, perhaps from their novelty, and also from their flattering every man in his favourite foible. In these plays almost all the characters are good, and exceedingly generous; they are lavish enough of their *tin* money on the stage; and though they want humour, have abundance of sentiment and feeling. If they happen to have faults or foibles,

the spectator is taught not only to pardon, but to applaud them, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts ; so that folly, instead of being ridiculed, is commended, and the comedy aims at touching our passions without the power of being truly pathetic. In this manner we are likely to lose one great source of entertainment on the stage ; for while the comic poet is invading the province of the tragic muse, he leaves her lovely sister quite neglected. Of this however he is no ways solicitous, as he measures his fame by his profits.

But it will be said, that the theatre is formed to amuse mankind, and that it matters little, if this end be answered, by what means it is obtained. If mankind find delight in weeping at comedy, it would be cruel to abridge them in that or any other innocent pleasure. If those pieces are denied the name of comedies, yet call them by any other name, and if they are delightful, they are good. Their success, it will be said, is a mark of their merit, and it is only abridging our happiness to deny us an inlet to amusement.

These objections however are rather specious than solid. It is true, that amusement is a great object of the theatre ; and it will be allowed, that these sentimental pieces do often amuse us : but the question is, whether the true comedy would not amuse us more ? The question is, whether a character supported throughout a piece with its ridicule still attending, would not give us more delight than this species of bastard tragedy, which only is applauded because it is new ?

A friend of mine, who was sitting unmoved at one of these sentimental pieces, was asked how he

could be so indifferent. "Why truly," says he, "as the hero is but a tradesman, it is indifferent to me whether he be turned out of his counting-house on Fish-street Hill, since he will still have enough left to open shop in St. Gilès's."

The other objection is as ill-grounded ; for though we should give these pieces another name, it will not mend their efficacy. It will continue a kind of *mulish* production, with all the defects of its opposite parents, and marked with sterility. If we are permitted to make comedy weep, we have an equal right to make tragedy laugh, and to set down in blank verse the jests and repartees of all the attendants in a funeral procession.

But there is one argument in favour of sentimental comedy which will keep it on the stage, in spite of all that can be said against it. It is of all others the most easily written. Those abilities, that can hammer out a novel, are fully sufficient for the production of a sentimental comedy. It is only sufficient to raise the characters a little ; to deck out the hero with a riband, or give the heroine a title ; then to put an insipid dialogue without character or humour into their mouths, give them mighty good hearts, very fine clothes, furnish a new set of scenes, make a pathetic scene or two, with a sprinkling of tender melancholy conversation through the whole, and there is no doubt but all the ladies will cry, and all the gentlemen applaud.

Humour at present seems to be departing from the stage ; and it will soon happen that our comic players will have nothing left for it but a fine coat and a song. It depends upon the audience, whether they will actually drive those poor merry creatures

from the stage, or sit at a play as gloomy as at the tabernacle. It is not easy to recover an art when once lost; and it will be but a just punishment, that when, by our being too fastidious, we have banished humour from the stage, we should ourselves be deprived of the art of laughing.

XXIII.

SCOTCH MARRIAGES.

As I see you are fond of gallantry, and seem willing to set young people together as soon as you can, I cannot help lending my assistance to your endeavours, as I am greatly concerned in the attempt. You must know, sir, that I am landlady of one of the most noted inns on the road to Scotland, and have seldom less than eight or ten couples a week, who go down rapturous lovers, and return man and wife.

If there be in this world an agreeable situation, it must be that in which a young couple find themselves when just let loose from confinement, and whirling off to the land of promise. When the post-chaise is driving off, and the blinds are drawn up, sure nothing can equal it. And yet, I do not know how, what with the fears of being pursued, or the wishes for greater happiness, not one of my customers but seems gloomy and out of temper. The gentlemen are all sullen, and the ladies discontented.

But if it be so going down, how is it with them coming back? Having been for a fortnight together, they are then mighty good company to be sure. It is then the young lady's indiscretion stares her

in the face, and the gentleman himself finds that much is to be done before the money comes in.

For my own part, sir, I was married in the usual way; all my friends were at the wedding; I was conducted with great ceremony from the table to the bed; and I do not find that it any ways diminished my happiness with my husband, while, poor man, he continued with me. For my part, I am entirely for doing things in the old family way; I hate your new-fashioned manners, and never loved an outlandish marriage in my life.

As I have had numbers call at my house, you may be sure I was not idle in inquiring who they were, and how they did in the world after they left me. I cannot say that I ever heard much good come of them; and of a history of twenty-five, that I noted down in my ledger, I do not know a single couple that would not have been full as happy if they had gone the plain way to work, and asked the consent of their parents. To convince you of it, I will mention the names of a few, and refer the rest to some fitter opportunity.

Imprimis, miss Jenny Hastings went down to Scotland with a tailor, who, to be sure, for a tailor was a very agreeable sort of a man. But I do not know how, he did not take proper measure of the young lady's disposition: they quarrelled at my house on their return; so she left him for a cornet of dragoons, and he went back to his shopboard.

Miss Rachel Runfort went off with a grenadier. They spent all their money going down; so that he carried her down in a post-chaise, and coming back, she helped to carry his knapsack.

Miss Racket went down with her lover in their

own phaeton ; but upon their return, being very fond of driving, she would be every now and then for holding the whip. This bred a dispute ; and before they were a fortnight together, she felt that he could exercise the whip on somebody else besides the horses.

Miss Meekly, though all compliance to the will of her lover, could never reconcile him to the change of his situation. It seems he married her supposing she had a large fortune ; but being deceived in their expectations, they parted, and they now keep separate garrets in Rosemary-lane.

The next couple of whom I have any account, actually lived together in great harmony and uncloying kindness for no less than a month ; but the lady, who was a little in years, having parted with her fortune to her dearest life, he left her to make love to that better part of her which he valued more.

The next pair consisted of an Irish fortune-hunter, and one of the prettiest modestest ladies that ever my eyes beheld. As he was a well-looking gentleman all dressed in lace, and as she seemed very fond of him, I thought they were blessed for life. Yet I was quickly mistaken. The lady was no better than a common woman of the town, and he was no better than a sharper ; so they agreed upon a mutual divorce ; he now dresses at the York ball, and she is in keeping by the member for our borough in parliament.

In this manner we see, that all those marriages in which there is interest on one side and disobedience on the other, are not likely to promise a long harvest of delights. If our fortune-hunting gentlemen would but speak out, the young lady, instead of a

lover, would often find a sneaking rogue, that only wanted the lady's purse, and not her heart. For my own part, I never saw any thing but design and falsehood in every one of them ; and my blood has boiled in my veins when I saw a young fellow of twenty kneeling at the feet of a twenty thousand pounder, professing his passion, while he was taking aim at her money. I do not deny but there may be love in a Scotch marriage, but it is generally all on one side.

Of all the sincere admirers I ever knew, a man of my acquaintance, who however did not run away with his mistress to Scotland, was the most so. An old exciseman of our town, who, as you may guess, was not very rich, had a daughter, who, as you shall see, was not very handsome. It was the opinion of every body, that this young woman would not soon be married, as she wanted two main articles, beauty and fortune. But for all this a very well-looking man, that happened to be travelling those parts, came and asked the exciseman for his daughter in marriage. The exciseman, willing to deal openly by him, asked if he had seen the girl ; "for," said he, "she is hump-backed."—"Very well," cried the stranger, "that will do for me."—"Ay," says the exciseman, "but my daughter is as brown as a berry."—"So much the better," cried the stranger ; "such skins wear well."—"But she is bandy-legged," says the exciseman. "No matter," cries the other ; "her petticoats will hide that defect."—"But then she is very poor, and wants an eye."—"Your description delights me," cried the stranger : "I have been looking out for one of her make ; for I keep an exhibition of

wild beasts, and intend to show her off for a Chimpanzee."

XXIV.

ON THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN NATURE.

MANKIND have ever been prone to expatiate in the praise of human nature. The dignity of man is a subject that has always been the favourite theme of humanity; they have declaimed with that ostentation which usually accompanies such as are sure of having a partial audience; they have obtained victories, because there were none to oppose. Yet from all I have ever read or seen, men appear more apt to err by having too high, than by having too despicable an opinion of their nature; and by attempting to exalt their original place in the creation, depress their real value in society.

The most ignorant nations have always been found to think most highly of themselves. The Deity has ever been thought peculiarly concerned in their glory and preservation; to have fought their battles, and inspired their teachers: their wizards are said to be familiar with heaven: and every hero has a guard of angels as well as men to attend him. When the Portuguese first came among the wretched inhabitants of the coast of Africa, these savage nations readily allowed the strangers more skill in navigation and war; yet still considered them at best but as useful servants, brought to their coast by their guardian serpent, to supply them with luxuries they could have lived without. Though they could grant the Portuguese more riches, they could never allow them to have such a king as their

Tottimondelem, who wore a bracelet of shells round his neck, and whose legs were covered with ivory.

In this manner examine a savage in the history of his country and predecessors; you ever find his warriors able to conquer armies, and his sages acquainted with more than possible knowledge: human nature is to him an unknown country: he thinks it capable of great things, because he is ignorant of its boundaries; whatever can be conceived to be done he allows to be possible, and whatever is possible he conjectures must have been done. He never measures the actions and powers of others by what himself is able to perform, nor makes a proper estimate of the greatness of his fellows, by bringing it to the standard of his own capacity. He is satisfied to be one of a country where mighty things have been; and imagines the fancied power of others reflects a lustre on himself. Thus by degrees he loses the idea of his own insignificance in a confused notion of the extraordinary powers of humanity, and is willing to grant extraordinary gifts to every pretender, because unacquainted with their claims.

This is the reason why demi-gods and heroes have ever been erected in times or countries of ignorance and barbarity: they addressed a people who had high opinions of human nature, because they were ignorant how far it could extend; they addressed a people who were willing to allow that men should be gods, because they were yet imperfectly acquainted with God and with man. These impostors knew that all men are naturally fond of seeing something very great made from the little materials of humanity; that ignorant nations are not more

proud of building a tower to reach heaven, or a pyramid to last for ages, than of raising up a demi-god of their own country and creation. The same pride that erects a colossus or a pyramid instals a god or a hero : but though the adoring savage can raise his colossus to the clouds, he can exalt the hero not one inch above the standard of humanity ; incapable therefore of exalting the idol, he debases himself, and falls prostrate before him.

When man has thus acquired an erroneous idea of the dignity of his species, he and the gods become perfectly intimate ; men are but angels, angels are but men, nay but servants that stand in waiting to execute human commands. The Persians, for instance, thus address their prophet Haly : “ I salute thee, glorious Creator, of whom the sun is but the shadow. Masterpiece of the lord of human creatures, great star of justice and religion, the sea is not rich and liberal, but by the gifts of thy munificent hands. The angel treasurer of heaven reaps his harvest in the fertile gardens of the purity of thy nature. The *primum mobile* would never dart the ball of the sun through the trunk of heaven, were it not to serve the morning out of the extreme love she has for thee. The angel Gabriel, messenger of truth, every day kisses the groundsel of thy gate. Were there a place more exalted than the most high throne of God, I would affirm it to be thy place, O master of the faithful ! Gabriel, with all his art and knowledge, is but a mere scholar to thee.” Thus, my friend, men think proper to treat angels ; but if indeed there be such an order of beings, with what a degree of satirical contempt must they listen to the songs of little mortals thus flattering each other !

thus to see creatures, wiser indeed than the monkey, and more active than the oyster, claiming to themselves a mastery of heaven ! minims, the tenants of an atom, thus arrogating a partnership in the creation of universal nature ! surely heaven is kind that launches no thunder at those guilty heads ; but it is kind, and regards their follies with pity, nor will destroy creatures that it loved into being.

But whatever success this practice of making demi-gods might have been attended with in barbarous nations, I do not know that any man became a god in a country where the inhabitants were refined. Such countries generally have too close an inspection into human weakness to think it invested with celestial power. They sometimes indeed admit the gods of strangers, or of their ancestors, who had their existence in times of obscurity ; their weakness being forgotten, while nothing but their power and their miracles were remembered. The Chinese, for instance, never had a god of their own country ; the idols which the vulgar worship at this day were brought from the barbarous nations around them. The Roman emperors, who pretended to divinity, were generally taught by a poniard that they were mortal ; and Alexander, though he passed among barbarous countries for a real god, could never persuade his polite countrymen into a similitude of thinking. The Lacedæmonians shrewdly complied with his commands by the following sarcastic edict : Εἰ Ἀλεξάνδρος βουλεται εἶναι Θεός, Θεός εἶτω.

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THE END.

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Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: March 2009

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